

Mammon or Messiah research

Saturday, September 18, 2010

Day of Atonement: A Sabbath of Sabbaths

Day of Atonement (Part 2)

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Festivals of the Jewish Year by Theodor H. Gaster (New York, 1953)

Known among the Jews as Yom Kippur, this day is the holiest day of the Jewish year. Atonement may also be termed the Day of Purgation (Cleansing). Leviticus 16:31 describes it as "a sabbath of sabbaths." It is an opportunity, year by year, to obtain divine forgiveness of sin, and to cleanse oneself before the LORD, Leviticus 16:30, restoring oneself to a state of wholeness and holiness, Leviticus 20:26 that Israel is supposed to be. Atonement involves individual as well as collective purification.

The physical rites of purification shown in Leviticus 16, the washings, verses 4, 24, 26, 28; sacrifices, verses 5, 6, 11, 15; fumigations, verses 12-13; sprinkling sacrificial blood, verses 14-15, 18-19; and changes of clothes, verses 4, 23; culminated in the dispatch into the desert of the goat to whom the collective sins of Israel had been previously transferred.

During the period of the Temple, only on the Day of Atonement, could the high priest utter the pronunciation of YHVH, instead of substituting "the Lord (Adonai)."

The rigorous fast and total abstinence of work may only be broken in the case of serious illness or where life is imperiled. The preceding evening and the whole of the day are devoted to religious services.

Scriptures Read By Jews on Atonement

Besides Leviticus 16 and Numbers 29:7-11, Isaiah 57:14 through 58:14, and the Book of Jonah are read. The theme of these latter passages is true repentance.

One of The Book of Jonah's major points is the contrast between the instant trust and ready repentance of the heathen and the lack of confidence and infidelity of the servant of God. When the storm rages at sea, the idolatrous mariners immediately call upon their gods, but Jonah does not call on the true God. Instead, he goes inside the ship to sleep. When they find out that Jonah is responsible for the tempest, they acknowledge the LORD. The king and the whole city of Nineveh fast in sackcloth and do repent, but Jonah is displeased.

The "Atonement Lesson" of the Book of Jonah is that (1) God's people sometimes have a harder time repenting than heathens do, (2) fasting is necessary to really repent, (3) if God accepted the repentance of heathen Nineveh, He will certainly accept the genuine repentance of His people, (4) It is impossible to flee from God's presence. He sees all, and your sin shall find you out, Numbers 32:23.

The Hebrew word for Jonah means "dove," the symbol used in Song of Solomon as a representation of Israel. Thus, the story of Jonah is an allegory of Israel's constant disobedience to God's command and of its vain efforts to flee from His presence. The "great fish" symbolizes lawlessness or chaos, or exile and captivity, in which Israel finds itself "engulfed" until released by the mercy of God.

Jonah was used by God to encourage King Jeroboam II of Israel to restore the boundary of territory of Israel, because God had mercy on them, II Kings 14:25-27.

Further readings on the Day of Atonement include Leviticus 18, which says in verse 4, "Ye shall do My judgments and keep My ordinances . . . ," and continues with the account of forbidden marriages, warning one not to fall into (sexual) temptation.

Another passage is Micah 7:18-20, which emphasizes God's mercy.

According to Leviticus 25:9, the Jubilee Year began on the Day of Atonement. Regarded as a holy period, the Jubilee could not begin until after the annual purification and re-sanctification had taken place.

The fall festivals correspond to the spring festivals: Nisan 1 corresponds to Tishri 1 (Day of Trumpets), Nisan 10 (day Passover lamb selected) corresponds to Tishri 10 (Day of Atonement) and Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15-21) to the Feast of Tabernacles (Tishri 15-21).

The Jewish Festivals by Hayyim Schauss (Cincinnati, 1938)

During the time of the Second Temple, Jews referred to the Day of Atonement as "The Great Day," or "The Day." Jews in all lands fasted and spent the day entirely in the synagogue, earnestly praying. Philo notes that even backsliding Jews became "very pious" on that day. After destruction of the Temple, Atonement continued to be the greatest day of the Jewish year.

A Guide to Yom Kippur by Rabbi Louis Jacobs (London, 1957)

The Day of Atonement is an awesome and joyful day of repentance, a day of peace and harmony and reconciliation, of prayer and reverence and awe when man comes face to face with God.

Jewish Rabbis have noted that the numerical value of the letters for the Hebrew word for Satan totals 364, one less than the number of days in the year. And on that one day, the Day of Atonement, the Satan of strife, contention, coarseness and materialism, holds no sway over human affairs.

It is hypocritical to devote one day in the year to prayer, fasting and introspection, and forget all about these things during the rest of the year. Unless the Day of Atonement has an effect on those who observe it during the whole year, there is no meaning to the day. He who says, "I will sin and the Day of Atonement will atone for my sin," does not find atonement.

During Temple times, the day of Atonement was unique in that the High Priest discarded his garments of splendor, and wearing only the plain linen tunic and garments of the common priest, entered the Holy of Holies to atone for his own sins as well as those of all Israel.

In Rabbinical literature, Yom Kippur is the great and holy day Israel meets its God, the Judgment Day, the culmination of the Ten Days of Repentance beginning with the Day of Trumpets, when God is especially near, when Moses brought down the second tablets of the Ten Commandments, showing God had mercy and had pardoned them for the sin of worshipping the golden calf.

Jews believe that Atonement is only for sins committed against God. For offenses against one's neighbor, man does not find atonement on Yom Kippur until he has pacified (given restitution to) those he has offended.

Though a day of fasting and self-denial, Atonement is also a day of joy because sin is pardoned and man is reconciled to God.

Rabbis thought Atonement was a particularly fitting occasion for girls to dress up in finery, and young men to propose to them. Thus a proposal of marriage could be carried out in the right spirit, without the object of lust, because on Atonement we are striving to overcome the lust of the flesh, and because Atonement is the holiest day of the year and marriage is the holiest relationship God has ordained.

The Name "Yom Kippur"

Yom Kippur (literally, "Day Atonement") is the common Jewish form of the Biblical Yom Ha-Kippurim ("Day of Atonements," plural). We need atonements for the many sins we have committed. Kippurim and Kapparah mean "to scour," "to cleanse thoroughly," "to ease," or "to cover, hide out of sight."

Fasting

From the earliest times, "afflicting the soul," Leviticus 16:29 was understood to mean fasting. Isaiah 58:3 proves this.

The Mishnah (code of Jewish interpretation) forbids eating, drinking, washing, anointing and marital intercourse on the Day of Atonement.

Four main reasons for the command to fast on the Day of Atonement:

- (1) By fasting we show contrition for the wrong we have done and the good we have failed to do. It is not mashochism. Fasting fulfills the need to make a self-sacrifice in order to demonstrate that one has repented and not merely given lip service of sorrow for past sins. Fasting affirms a man's sincerity, and shows he knows he deserves to be punished for his sins.
- (2) Self-discipline. Repentance must be preceded by an attempt at self-discipline. The ideal person is one who is hard on himself but indulgent towards others. Fasting on the Day of Atonement serves as a reminder for the need of self-discipline which leads to self-improvement.
- (3) Fasting is a means of focusing the mind on the spiritual.
- (4) Fasting is a means of awakening compassion for others. See Isaiah 58:6-7.

Customs Connected With Atonement

Before going to the Synagogue, the father of the house blesses the children. To sons, he says, "God make you as Ephraim and Manasseh," and the daughters, "God make you as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah."

If possible, food should not even be handled on the Day of Atonement, except to give children their meals. Jews feel that children under nine should not be allowed to fast even for a few hours. But from this age on they should be trained to fast in gradually longer periods. It is believed that a sick person does not have to fast if he feels strongly that to fast may endanger his life.

After Yom Kippur, Jews have a minor feast, quoting Ecclesiastes 9:7, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, And drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works."

The Reality of Sin

The Day of Atonement drives home three points, (1) that sin is real, an offense against God, (2) that God, nonetheless pardons sin, and (3) that such pardon does not come unless man does something -- repents with fasting, rends his heart. There are three Bible Hebrew terms for sin:

(1) Pesha means rebellion. It is the attitude of mind in which a man sets himself up as the sole judge of his actions, recognizing neither God nor His law. Pesha signifies the refusal of man to consider himself accountable to God for his actions.

(2) Avon comes from a root meaning "to be twisted," or "to be crooked" (compare our word, "a crook"). An example is man who starts out right, but throws everything away in an act of folly.

(3) Het comes from a root meaning "to miss," used, for instance, when an archer fails to hit the target. Het denotes lack of character or staying power. It can also mean unwitting sin, and the careless driver, slack teacher, overindulgent or neglectful parent, and thoughtless son, are all guilty of het.

Repentance

Teshubah, the Hebrew word for repentance, means "turning back." It involves, according to Jews, (1) contrition for the sin committed and (2) firm resolve not to repeat it.

Day of Atonement in the Talmud

After the Ten Commandments were given to Israel on Pentecost, Moses ascended Mt. Sinai and remained there 40 days to receive the Tablets. He descended on the 17th of Tammuz and broke the Tablets because the people worshipped the Golden Calf. For forty days Moses set up his tent beyond the camp of Israel, and the people mourned. On the 1st of Elul (sixth month), Moses ascended the mountain to receive the Second Tablets. During this period the Hebrews fasted daily from sunrise to sunset. On the 40th day they fasted from sunset to sunset. This was Tishri 10. On the morning of the 10th, the Hebrews wept when Moses came down with the tablets, and he wept when he beheld their repentance. Then God said, "Your repentance is accepted, and this day will remain the Day of Atonement throughout all generations." -- Tanna Eliyahu Zuta, 4

Why are there two goats, one a sacrifice on the altar, and one a sacrifice on the rock to Azazel? The goats represent Esau and Jacob, or the wicked and the righteous. Both were born in the same home; both were brought up in goodness. Yet one chose to labor for God, and the other against God. "Az" means "impudent." "Azal" means "departed." If Israel is impudent and disobedient, he shall be forced to take his departure into lands of exile. -- Abrabanel, Ahare

Rabbi Simi gave a Yom Kippur sermon based on Hosea 14:2 and Ezekiel 36:26. Satan is compared to a large rock in the middle of a highway where people stumbled over it, or even a rock in people's heart. God says, "Let each of you break off a piece by means of repentance, and resolve not to obey it. When the Evil Impulse is sufficiently crushed, I shall in the days-to-come remove Satan from your midst." -- Pesikta Shubah, Ruhn, page 165a

Things between thee and God are forgiven on Yom Kippur Satan accuses the Jews every day of the year except on the Day of Atonement. -- Sifra to Ahare, Yoma, 20a

Satan is locked up on Yom Kippur. -- Midrash Tehillim, 27

Rabbi Jose said: "He who repents is regarded by God as if he went up to Jerusalem and offered sacrifices to Him," Psalm 51:19. -- Pesikta Shubah Buber, 158

Jewish tradition also holds that Atonement was the day Adam both sinned and repented; and also the day on which Abraham was circumcised.

"Jesus' Ministry and the Jubilee Year," from The Sabbaths of God by James L. Porter (New York, 1966)

Jesus began His ministry in the fall of 27 A.D. He had been baptized a few months before the Passover in 27 A.D., then after the Temptation, calling disciples and the Cana wine miracle, He went to Jerusalem for Passover, then through Samaria, and began his public ministry in the fall, near his 30th birthday, Luke 3:23.

In Luke 4:16, when He came to Nazareth, He read "on the Sabbath day." This should be translated "Day of Weeks," or Pentecost. This was Pentecost of 28 A.D., during the Jubilee Year of 27-28 A.D. (Day of Atonement to Day of Atonement).

The portion He read, "He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" is cited from Isaiah 61:1-2, and clearly shows a Jubilee setting. Pentecost and Jubilee are both counted.

The prophecy in Isaiah is speaking of the time Israel will be resettled in their land forever, Isaiah 60:21, "Your people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever . . .," and Isaiah 49:6, 8, 9, " . . . you should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved [desolations] of Israel Thus says the LORD, in an acceptable time have I heard you . . . and I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. That thou may say to the prisoners, Go forth, . . . "

In the future, Christ will force a Jubilee on all Israel. In 28 A.D., He was proclaiming a Jubilee for those who would accept it voluntarily. The Day of Vengeance [which portion of Isaiah 61:2 Jesus did not quote] is future and yet to be fulfilled. Isaiah 61:4, "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations."

Israel entered the land in the year 1493-1492 B.C. The year of Jubilee when Sennacherib came against Judah (Isaiah 37:30-32 and II Kings 19:29) was 709-708 B.C., and when Christ read the prophecy from Isaiah, 27-28 A.D. Thus, 1987-88 and 2036-37 will be Jubilees.

COMMENT: Porter's calculations are incorrect according to the Jewish Encyclopedia, because if 27-28 A.D. was a Jubilee, 77-78 A.D. would be a Jubilee, and so on, so that 1927-28 and 1977-78 were Jubilees. It is interesting to note that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (WCG) was baptized and began preaching in 1927-28, a possible Jubilee year. [this author of the COG is determining the Jubilee with a count of 50 years (the 50th year), the year after being the first of the next 49] [MMr agrees with Porter; the 50th year is counted as the first year of the next 49]

The Jewish Encyclopedia, article "Sabbatical Year and Jubilee," says that the jubilee law came into force after the Israelites came into possession of Palestine, Leviticus 25. Jubilee was like a Sabbath rest year, with the addition that "ye shall return every man unto his possession," Leviticus 25:10. See Josephus, Antiquities vi., 8, 28.

"The majority of rabbis hold that the jubilee year was an intercalation, and followed the seventh Sabbatical year, making two fallow years in succession. After both had passed, the next cycle began. They adduce this theory from the plain words of the Law to 'hallow the fiftieth year,' and also from the assurance of God's promise of a yield in the sixth year sufficient for maintenance during the following three years, until the ninth year, until her fruits come in,' Leviticus 25:22, which, they say, refers to the jubilee year." The duration of the Sabbatical year was from Day of Trumpets to Day of Trumpets.

Maimonides notes in one of his writings that "the Sabbatical year occurred last year" which has been interpreted as 1507 of the Seleucid era, 4956 of creation and 1195 C.E. Jews have been lax in observing the 7th and 50th years. As a result, the exact year of the sabbatical year is in dispute.

Talmudic sources state the entrance of Israel into Palestine occurred in 2489 after creation, and 850 years, or 17 jubilees passed between that and the destruction of the First Temple. The first cycle began after the conquest of the land and its distribution among the tribes -- which took 14 years -- so that the first 7th year observed was the 21st year of the cycle. Joshua celebrated the first jubilee, and died just before the second. The last jubilee was on the tenth of Tishri, when the city was smitten, Ezekiel 40:1.

The Samaritan "Book of Joshua" date the first month of the first Sabbatical cycle and of the first jubilee cycle beginning from the crossing of the Jordan and entrance of Israel into their possession, 2794 after creation.

Talmudic writers state both the First and Second Temples were destroyed "on the closing of the Sabbatical year." The sixteenth jubilee was in the 18th year of Josiah (who reigned 31 years) and the remaining 13 years of his reign, plus the 11 years of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin and the 11 years of Zedekiah, fix the first exilic year as the 36th year of the jubilee cycle, or the 25th year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, or 14 years from the destruction of the holy city.

Babylonian captivity lasted 70 years. Ezra sanctified Palestine in the 7th year of the second entrance, when the Temple was dedicated, Ezra 6:15-16, 7:7. The first cycle began with Ezra's sanctification. The Second Temple stood 420 years, and was destroyed, like the First, in the 421st year, at the close of a sabbatical year.

Rule of Talmud for finding sabbatical year is to add one year and divide by seven the number of years since the destruction of the Second Temple, or add 2 for every 100 years and divide the sum by seven.

Maimonides's calculations have been accepted by most Jewish scholars. He gives a sabbatical year as 1175 C.E., and he begins the cycle by the year following the destruction of the Temple. Another fixed year has been 1552. These show that the destruction of the Second Temple was in a sabbatical year, 68-69 A.D., although it was not a jubilee year.

A Comparison of the Seventh and Jubilee Years, by Gary Sjordal

Seventh Year

1. Begins at Feast of Tabernacles Deuteronomy 31:10.
2. Land rested at the beginning of the Seventh Year for the whole year; all crops including grapes and olives, except fruit trees, not harvested. Purpose: that the poor may eat, give a Sabbath to the land, Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 19:23.
3. At the beginning of the year, Hebrew bondservants are released, if they so desire. They serve six years, are released "in the seventh year," with plenty of food. If they won't be released, an aul was bored through one of their ears, they became servants for ever, Deuteronomy 15:12-18.
4. At the end of the seventh year, all debts are released to "brothers," but not to "foreigners." Purpose: to help the poor, Deuteronomy 15:1-11.

Jubilee, 50th Year

1. Begins on Day of Atonement, with the sound of the trumpet (after the goat ceremony is completed), Leviticus 25:9.
2. Follows the 49th year, and like it, the land is rested, making two consecutive years the land is rested. Purpose: to show that God will bless you, providing enough crops the 48th year to last for three years until the harvest of the crops planted in the 51st year, Leviticus 25:20-22.
3. Every man to be returned to his own possession. Purpose: so we will not oppress one another, Leviticus 25:10-17.
4. At end of 50th year, another 50-year cycle begins; 51st year is first year of a new seven year cycle. See Jewish Encyclopedia, Article, "Sabbatical Year and Jubilee."

Day of Atonement: Liberty Through Fasting

After Jesus Christ returns as a conquering king, there are events that must occur before the Kingdom of God can be set up. God must perform some unfinished business.

The tenth day of the seventh month is the fifth of God's seven annual Festivals, the Day of Atonement. This festival must be fulfilled before the Millennium can commence. What does this day of fasting have to do with the Fall Harvest?

Jubilee Year

The Day of Atonement also has a trumpet associated with it. This trumpet is sounded on the tenth day of the seventh month in the year of Jubilee: "Then shalt thou cause the TRUMPET of the JUBILEE to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all the land," Leviticus 25:9.

Liberty For Israel

The epic up-coming Jubilee will probably represent the regathering of modern Israel from the various places on earth where they are imprisoned or in hiding, after being taken into captivity, either just before or during the Great Tribulation. After years of horror, Israel will again be free! What a wonderful occurrence that will be.

"Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and PROCLAIM LIBERTY throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family," Leviticus 25:10.

First Goat: The Lord

Leviticus 16 is the Day of Atonement chapter. Here we find the High Priest going into the Holy of Holies before the Mercy Seat for a once a year special sin offering, Leviticus 16:2-3.

Then two goats are chosen and lots cast to determine which one of the goats will be representative of the Lord (type of Christ). This goat is to be offered as a sin offering, slaughtered as was Christ, with the blood brought inside the veil of the most holy place and sprinkled on the mercy seat, Leviticus 16:7-9, 15.

Second Goat: Azazel

What about the second goat, the one called "Azazel" which is translated "scapegoat" in the King James Version? This goat is not to be killed, but rather is presented alive to the Lord, later to be released into the wilderness. This in turn leads to other possible translations for azazel: "escape goat," "removed," "separated," Leviticus 16:8, 10.

But, there is controversy about this goat. There are two widely different views, each of which seems to have support from the Bible.

View 1: The "scapegoat" represents Satan the Devil who will have the sins of all mankind placed on him since he is the author and father of sin. He is then sent by an angel into the wilderness forever, Leviticus 16:20-22.

View 2: The "azazel" goat represents another aspect of Jesus Christ, the one who had all the sins of mankind placed on Him; He had to die in order to pay the penalty of sin. Christ carries our sins -- not the Devil.

A third view says that the first goat represents Christians faithful to their calling even unto death. The second goat is symbolic of Christians who left their calling and had to go through the Great Tribulation.

Atonement

Jesus Christ died for our sins, and all our sins were borne by Him. This is the likely meaning of the two goats: two aspects of Christ. Although it might be poetic justice to place all sins on Satan's head, the fact is that it is Christ who will bring reconciliation with our heavenly Father.

"The goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat [azazel], shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an ATONEMENT . . ." Leviticus 16:10. It is Christ that makes atonement with God.

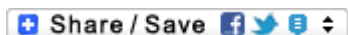
Fasting

The Day of Atonement is the only festival of God which requires fasting by those observing it. No work including preparation of food is allowed on this day, Leviticus 23:27-28.

Why is there no work? "Ye shall do NO WORK in that same day: for IT IS A DAY OF ATONEMENT, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God," Leviticus 23:28. One of the best ways to get close to God is to "afflict your soul," Leviticus 23:27, which means to fast. David said, "I humbled [margin: afflicted] my soul with fasting" Psalm 35:13.

Fasting on a regular basis is an excellent way to tame your human nature and get close to God in prayer and study. It is only once a year that God names the specific day for you to fast (other fast days are on an individual choice basis). And this is so you can be more at one with Him.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:45 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Friday, September 17, 2010

[Ira Chernus: This Yom Kippur, We Must Atone for the Sins of Israeli Policy](#)

Israel could not have sustained all these years of occupation without the political, diplomatic, and financial support of much of the worldwide Jewish community.

This Yom Kippur, We Must Atone for the Sins of Israeli Policy

by Ira Chernus [article link](#)

September 14, 2010 | AlterNet

On this Yom Kippur, as always, millions of Jews will observe their most solemn day of the year by fasting. Why? "No food. You know, we have to atone for our sins." That's how Woody Allen's stereotypically Jewish father explains it in the classic film, Annie Hall. But Annie's ultra-WASP mother is still baffled. "What sins?" she asks. "I don't understand." "Tell you the truth," Woody's dad admits "neither do we."

This year plenty of Jews will feel the same confusion, wondering exactly what sins their community should be atoning for. Israeli-Palestinian peace talks are now underway; Israel faces an imminent deadline for extending the moratorium on settlement expansion. That raises troubling questions about Israel's guilt and the Jewish people's guilt for perpetuating the conflict. Here in the U.S., at least, more Jews than you might think will feel that they and their people have a lot to atone for.

There has always been something confusing about Yom Kippur. A centerpiece of the worship service is a ritual confession that the whole congregation recites, admitting their guilt for a very long list of sins -- a list so long that it's virtually impossible for anyone to commit all of them in a single year. So every Jew is supposed to repent for a whole bunch of sins that they've never done and would never even think of doing. I once showed the Yom Kippur prayer book to a psychotherapist, who promptly pronounced it a pathological outpouring of fantasied guilt.

On the other hand, most rabbis are quick to explain that there's a healthy logic to it: The confession is in the first person plural -- "For the sins that we have committed" -- to emphasize the Jewish value of communal solidarity and mutual responsibility, the idea that everyone is responsible to everyone else for the moral status of the whole society. It should be easy enough to see the implication: All Jews are responsible for the actions Israel takes (or, in the case of settlements and peace talks, perhaps doesn't take) in their name.

Until a very few years ago, though, Israel's policies triggered virtually no guilt in synagogues across the U.S. It was all too easy to assume that communal solidarity and mutual responsibility meant supporting the Israeli government, no matter what it did, and standing firm against any Palestinian demands for self-determination. Now the climate of American Jewish opinion is rapidly changing, complicating that crucial question: "What sins? Precisely what should we, as a community, feel guilty and atone for?"

Yes, there are still far too many Jews who see Israel as totally blameless. And that old guard is still very, very loud. So from outside the Jewish community it can be hard to perceive any meaningful change -- especially hard for progressives who've rightfully been demanding a radical change in Israeli policies and Jewish attitudes for years. By the moral standards of genuine freedom and justice, the Jewish state still deserves the condemnation that it receives daily from progressives.

From inside the community, though, the change looks dramatic. Most Jews now endorse a Palestinian state -- even Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, once the darling of the hard-core Jewish right. Though he's dragging his feet and digging in his heels to slow down the process as much as he can, he's at least going through the motions of negotiating for Palestinian independence. But the future of the peace process is hardly up to Netanyahu alone. He's just one player among many in the process -- including the several million U.S. Jews observing Yom Kippur.

And the holy day this year finds a surprisingly wide variety of opinions in the air. More and more U.S. Jews every day are beginning to raise questions, criticize Israeli policies, and confess that far too many of those policies are both a strategic and a moral error. A growing number would even call it a sin.

We can expect to hear that kind of message even from some synagogue pulpits this year. Nearly 600 rabbis have joined the Rabbinic Cabinet of J Street, the nation's most prominent Jewish pro-Israel, pro-peace group. [The Cabinet](#) is circulating a letter that acknowledges Israel's "dangerous behavior," cites the biblical injunction to "rebuke your kin," and calls for the Israelis to make "difficult compromises and mutual sacrifice." That's a message hardly any rabbi would have dared endorse publicly just a few years ago. Now an impressively long and growing list of rabbis, including nine former presidents of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, have signed the letter.

In the same letter, the rabbis declare themselves "deeply committed to free and open dialogue about Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" -- also something that would have been impossible a few years ago. If the Jewish dialogue is indeed free and open, the rabbis will hear some congregants tell them that even J Street does not go far enough in acknowledging the sins of Israeli policy.

In some of the pews, and even in a few pulpits, there will be new lines added this year to the traditional confessional, lines like these:

For the sin that we have committed by ignoring the suffering of Palestinians for so long
For the sin that we have committed by rejecting the Palestinian demand for self-determination
For the sin that we have committed by supporting a cruel military occupation
For the sin that we have committed by tolerating the expansion of West Bank settlements
For the sin that we have committed by approving the economic strangulation of Gaza
For the sin that we have committed by accepting our own government's biased "special relationship" with Israel
For the sin that we have committed by lobbying for more U.S. military aid to Israel
For the sin that we have committed by ignoring even the most egregious Israeli abuses
For the sin that we have committed by remaining silent for so long in the face of injustice

For all these and more -- for the supposedly "pro-Israel" sins we have not yet recognized, but some day will -- oh God, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

The confession is supposed to bring a sense of spiritual cleansing as long as it triggers a sincere commitment to change one's ways, to do the right thing in the coming year. I know plenty of Jews who have already expressed the need for such cleansing and made such a commitment when it comes to the Israel-Palestine conflict. This Yom Kippur I trust that they

will spread the word and share their experience with their fellow congregation. In fact they must, because the confession is worded in the first person plural: "For the sin that we have committed."

In this case, a collective guilt feeling is hardly pathological. In fact it's totally realistic. It's not just this or that individual Jew who has supported the Israeli oppression of Palestine. It has been a communal sin. Israel could not have sustained all these years of occupation without the political, diplomatic, and financial support of the worldwide Jewish community, especially the Jews of the United States. And Jews have based far too much of their group life on the foundation of a blind "support for Israel," creating a monolithic bloc that has dominated U.S. government policy on the Middle East conflict. So it's the whole community that must shift its attitude.

Which is why the spiritual cleansing -- the confession and commitment to change -- is also a profoundly political act. When American Jews publicly voice a more critical view of Israeli policies, the political effect ripples out around the world. Not only does it encourage other Jews to do the same, it also sends a message to gentile friends, relatives, co-workers, and neighbors that it's now permissible to criticize Israel. (If you're not Jewish, be sure to ask Jews you know about the change they see in their Jewish circles.)

The old monolithic consensus in the Jewish community had an immense chilling effect on gentiles; there was good reason to fear that even the mildest critique of Israeli policies would trigger charges of anti-semitism. A Jewish community engaged in free and open public debate, with even the most radical voices heard, will put an end to that chilling effect.

Once Americans of every persuasion feel free to voice their views on the Middle East freely, we can expect a slow but steady and sizeable shift in public opinion toward a genuinely even-handed U.S. policy. The mass media will gradually, even if grudgingly, follow suit. The old raucous right-wing views (from Christians as well as Jews) will still fill the air too, of course. But a diversity of opinion will eventually become the norm.

That will give the U.S. government a lot more room to maneuver in its diplomatic dealings with Israel. The Obama administration has clearly signaled its desire to put more pressure on Israel than its predecessors, especially in its early call for a halt to all settlement expansion on the West Bank. The administration quickly backed off from that demand, showing that the political times have not yet changed enough.

But Obama is still putting gentle pressure on Netanyahu to [extend the](#) moratorium, and at the latest round of talks U.S. envoy [George Mitchell again](#) called on Israel to take that step. The [latest signal](#) from Netanyahu is that the Israeli, not the U.S., leader is waffling, trying to find a compromise that might satisfy both the Americans and his own right-wing base. With the Pentagon now indicating that an Israeli-Palestinian peace is a vital U.S. national security interest, Obama has every reason to keep pushing the Israelis as hard as he can.

With a critical election coming up, though, he can push only as hard as domestic political conditions will allow. The more options the electorate gives him at home, the harder he can push. Of course the administration will still be somewhat limited by powerful pressure from the right. The policy shifts will be gradual and behind the scenes, at least at first. But that's how all diplomacy works. So a publicly-voiced change of heart among U.S. Jews, opening the door to a wider debate among gentiles too, could have powerful political repercussions in Washington.

And the ripple effect would reach beyond our shores. Though Israeli Jews hate to admit it, they know deep down that they depend heavily on support from U.S. Jews and the U.S. government. Economic support isn't as vital as it used to be. But military weaponry and, even more, diplomatic cover remain crucial. With the rest of the world increasingly questioning the very idea of a "Jewish state," most Israelis see the U.S. as their last dependable ally. A changing American Jewish attitude would weaken the foundation of U.S. diplomatic support, which would throw Israel into deep anxiety, giving the U.S. more leverage to push the Israelis to make concessions.

The ripple would impact the Arab side of the conflict powerfully, too. In an [extensive study](#) of Palestinians and Israelis, asking what would really help to end the conflict, two social scientists found that it wasn't so much tangible trade-offs as symbolic expressions of mutual acceptance and respect: "Palestinian hard-liners were more willing to consider recognizing the right of Israel to exist if the Israelis simply offered an official apology for Palestinian suffering in the 1948 war."

Apology: repentance and atonement for sin. Not only Palestinians, but people around the world who support the Palestinian cause, would welcome such words of contrition, even if they came not from the Israeli government but from masses of Jews in the U.S. and around the world.

There's a common view in most countries, with good reason, that Israel is a U.S.-sponsored outpost of American-style neocolonialism. A message of atonement from any sizeable portion of the Jewish community would begin to raise questions about that view, especially if it were accompanied by signals of change from the U.S. administration. That would go far to make the global political climate more amenable to constructive dialogue and eventually to peace.

So when U.S. Jews ask themselves and each other this Yom Kippur, "What sins? What are we called to atone for?", the answers can have a profound impact that is both religious and political.

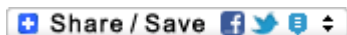
If this all seems too hopeful and naïve, perhaps it's because I spent so many Yom Kippurs of my youth in synagogue, reciting not only those long confessionals but also the final prayer of the day, which says that even at the last moment God gives sinners a chance for what's called in Hebrew "t'shuvah" -- repentance or, more literally, turning around and heading in the opposite direction. It's no coincidence that Yom Kippur concludes the Jewish New Year season, the time of fresh hope and new beginnings, even when it seems impossible.

That's hardly a distinctively Jewish idea, though. It's the same kind of hope that spurred the abolitionists, the suffragettes, the civil rights movement, the California farm workers, and so many other successful progressive movements. Most of them were able to go on fighting for justice, even when the world scorned them as naïve and gave up on their cause, because they were driven by a faith that was at once both spiritual and political. Who said religion and politics don't mix?

Ira Chernus is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Read more of his writing on Israel, Palestine, and American Jews on his [blog](#).

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[Les Leopold: Poverty Rises as Wall Street Billionaires Whine](#)

Poverty Rises as Wall Street Billionaires Whine

by Les Leopold [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 17, 2010 | Huffington Post | CommonDreams

The ranks of the working-age poor in the United States climbed to the highest level since the 1960s as the recession threw millions of people out of work last year, leaving one in seven Americans in poverty. The overall poverty rate climbed to 14.3 per cent, or 43.6 million people, the Census Bureau said yesterday in its annual report on the economic well-being of US households. [Gulfnews.com](#)

While 43.6 million Americans live in poverty, the richest men of finance sure are getting pissy. First [Steve Schwartzman](#), head of the Blackrock private equity company, compares the Obama administration's effort to close billionaires' tax loopholes to "the Nazi invasion of Poland." Then hedge fund mogul [David Loeb](#) announces that he's abandoning the Democrats because they're violating "this country's core founding principles" -- including "non-punitive taxation, Constitutionally-guaranteed protections against persecution of the minority, and an inexorable right of self-determination." Instead of showing their outrage about the spread of poverty in the richest nation on Earth, the super-rich want us to pity them?

Why are Wall Street's billionaires so whiny? Is it really possible to make \$900,000 an hour (not a typo -- that's what the top ten hedge fund managers take in), and still feel aggrieved about the way government is treating you? After you've been bailed out by the federal government to the tune of \$10 trillion (also not a typo) in loans, asset swaps, liquidity and other guarantees, can you really still feel like an oppressed minority?

You'd think the Wall Street moguls would be thankful. Not just thankful -- down on their knees kissing the ground taxpayers walk on and hollering hallelujah at the top of their lungs! These guys profited from puffing up the housing bubble, then got bailed out when the going got tough. (Please see [The Looting of America](#) for all the gory details.) Without taxpayer largess, these hedge fund honchos would be flat broke. Instead, they're back to hauling in obscene profits.

These billionaires don't even have to worry about serious financial reforms. The paltry legislation that squeaked through Congress did nothing to end too big and too interconnected to fail. In fact, the biggest firms got even bigger as they gobbled up troubled banks, with the generous support of the federal government. No bank or hedge fund was broken up. Nobody was forced to pay a financial transaction tax. None of the big boys had a cap placed on their astronomical wealth. No one's paying reparations for wrecking the US economy. The big bankers are still free to create and trade the very derivatives that catapulted us into this global crisis. You'd think the billionaires would be praying on the altar of government and erecting statues on Capital Hill in honor of St. Bailout.

Instead, standing before us are these troubled souls, haunted by visions of persecution. Why?

The world changed. Before the bubble burst, these people walked on water. Their billions proved that they were the best and the brightest -- not just captains of the financial universe, but global elites who had earned a place in history. They donated serious money to worthy causes -- and political campaigns. No one wanted to mess with them.

But then came the crash. And the things changed for the big guys -- not so much financially as spiritually. Plebeians, including me, are asking pointed questions and sometimes even being heard, both on the Internet and in the mainstream media. For the first time in a generation, the public wants to know more about these emperors and their new clothes. For instance:

- What do these guys actually do that earns them such wealth?
- Is what they do productive and useful for society? Is there any connection between what they earn and what they produce for society?
- Did they help cause the crash?
- Did these billionaires benefit from the bailouts? If so, how much?
- Are they exacerbating the current unemployment and poverty crisis with their shenanigans?
- Why shouldn't we eliminate their tax loopholes (like carried interest)?
- Should their sky-high incomes be taxed at the same levels as during the Eisenhower years?
- Can we create the millions of jobs we need if the billionaires continue to skim off so much of our nation's wealth??
- Should we curb their wealth and political influence?

How dare we ask such questions! How dare we consider targeting them for special taxes? How dare we even think about redistributing THEIR incomes... even if at the moment much of their money comes directly from our bailouts and tax breaks?

It's true that the billionaires live in a hermetically sealed world. But that doesn't mean they don't notice the riffraff nipping at their heels. And they don't like it much. So they've gotten busy doing what billionaires do best: using their money to shield themselves. They're digging into their bottomless war chests, tapping their vast connections and using their considerable influence to shift the debate away from them and towards the rest of us.

We borrowed too much, not them. We get too much health care, not them. We retire too soon, not them. We need to tighten our belts while they pull in another \$900,000 an hour. And if we want to cure poverty, we need to get the government to leave Wall Street alone. Sadly, their counter-offensive is starting to take hold.

How can this happen? Many Americans want to relate to billionaires. They believe that all of us are entitled to make as much as we can, pretty much by any means necessary. After all, maybe someday you or I will strike it rich. And when we do, we sure don't want government regulators or the taxman coming around!

Billionaires are symbols of American individual prowess and virility. And if we try to hold them back or slow them down, we're on the road to tyranny. Okay, the game is rigged in their favor. Okay, they got bailed out while the rest of us didn't -- especially the 29 million people who are jobless or forced into part-time work. But what matters most is that in America, nothing can interfere with individual money-making. That only a few of us actually make it into the big-time isn't a bad thing: It's what makes being rich so special. So beware: If we enact even the mildest of measures to rein in Wall Street billionaires, we're on the path to becoming North Korea.

Unfortunately, if we don't adjust our attitudes, we can expect continued high levels of unemployment and more people pushed below the poverty line. It's not clear that our economy will ever recover as long as the Wall Street billionaires keep siphoning off so much of our wealth. How can we create jobs for the many while the few are walking off with \$900,000 an hour with almost no new jobs to show for it? In the old days, even robber barons built industries that employed people -- steel, oil, railroads. Now the robber barons build palaces out of fantasy finance. We can keep coddling our financial billionaires and let our economy spiral down, or we can make them pay their fair share so we can create real jobs. These guys crashed the economy, they killed billions of jobs, and now they're cashing in on our bailout. They owe us. They owe the unemployed. They owe the poor.

Dwight D. Eisenhower was no radical, but he accepted the reality: If America was going to prosper -- and pay for its costly Cold War -- the super-rich would have to pony up. It was common knowledge that when the rich grew too wealthy, they used their excess incomes to speculate. In the 1950s, memories of the Great Depression loomed large, and people knew that a skewed distribution of income only fueled speculative booms and disastrous busts. On Ike's watch, the effective marginal tax rate for those earning over \$3 million (in today's dollars) was over 70 percent. The super-rich paid. As a nation we respected that other important American value: advancing the common good.

For the last thirty years we've been told that making as much as you can is just another way of advancing the common good. But the Great Recession erased that equation: The Wall Streeters who made as much as they could undermined the common good. It's time to balance the scales. This isn't just redistribution of income in pursuit of some egalitarian utopia. It's a way to use public policy to reattach billionaires to the common good.

It's time to take Eisenhower's cue and redeploy the excessive wealth Wall Street's high rollers have accumulated. If we leave it in their hands, they'll keep using it to construct speculative financial casinos. Instead, we could use that money to build a stronger, more prosperous nation. We could provide our people with free higher education at all our public colleges and universities -- just like we did for WWII vets under the GI Bill of Rights (a program that returned seven dollars in GDP for every dollar invested). We could fund a green energy Manhattan Project to wean us from fossil fuels. An added bonus: If we siphon some of the money off Wall Street, some of our brightest college graduates might even be attracted not to high finance but to jobs in science, education and healthcare, where we need them.

Of course, this pursuit of the common good won't be easy for the billionaires (and those who identify with them.). But there's just no alternative for this oppressed minority: They're going to have to learn to live on less than \$900,000 an hour.

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Les Leopold is the author of [The Looting of America: How Wall Street's Game of Fantasy Finance destroyed our Jobs, Pensions and Prosperity, and What We Can Do About It](#), Chelsea Green Publishing, June 2009.

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Thursday, September 16, 2010

Michael Moore: Never Forget: Bad Wars Aren't Possible Unless Good People Back Them

Never Forget: Bad Wars Aren't Possible Unless Good People Back Them

by Michael Moore [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 16, 2010 | Michael Moore | CommonDreams

I know we've been "free" of the Iraq War for two weeks now and our minds have turned to the new football season and Fashion Week in New York. And how exciting that the new fall TV season is just days away!

But before we get too far away from something we would all just like to forget, will you please allow me to just say something plain and blunt and necessary:

We invaded Iraq because most Americans -- including good liberals like Al Franken, Nicholas Kristof & Bill Keller of the *New York Times*, David Remnick of the *New Yorker*, the editors of the *Atlantic* and the *New Republic*, Harvey Weinstein, Hillary Clinton, Chuck Schumer and John Kerry -- wanted to.

Of course the actual blame for the war goes to Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld/Wolfowitz because they ordered the "precision" bombing, the invasion, the occupation, and the theft of our national treasury. I have no doubt that history will record that they committed the undisputed Crime of the (young) Century.

But how did they get away with it, considering they'd lost the presidential election by 543,895 votes? They also knew that the majority of the country probably wouldn't back them in such a war (a Newsweek poll in October 2002 showed 61% thought it was "very important" for Bush to get formal approval from the United Nations for war -- but that never happened). So how did they pull it off?

They did it by getting liberal voices to support their war. They did it by creating the look of bipartisanship. And they convinced other countries' leaders like Tony Blair to get on board and make it look like it wasn't just our intelligence agencies cooking the evidence.

But most importantly, they made this war (and its public support) happen because Bush & Co. had brilliantly conned the *New York Times* into running a bunch of phony front-page stories about how Saddam Hussein had all these "weapons of mass destruction." The administration gleefully fed this false information not to Fox News or the *Washington Times*. They gave it to America's leading liberal newspaper. They must have had a laugh riot each morning when they'd pick up the *New York Times* and read the nearly word-for-word scenarios and talking points that they had concocted in the Vice President's office.

I blame the *New York Times* more for this war than Bush. I **expected** Bush and Cheney to try and get away with what they did. But the *Times* -- and the rest of the press -- was supposed to STOP them by doing their job: Be a relentless watchdog of government and business -- and then inform the public so we can take action.

Instead, the *New York Times* gave the Bush administration the cover they needed. They could -- and did -- say, 'Hey, look, even the *Times* says Saddam has WMD!'

With this groundwork laid, the Bush crowd ended up convincing a whopping 70% of the public to support the war -- a public that had given him less than 48% of its vote in 2000.

Early liberal support for this war was the key ingredient in selling it to a majority of the public. I realize this is something that no one in the media -- nor most of us -- really wants to discuss. Who among us wants to feel the pain of having to remember that liberals, by joining with Bush, made this war happen?

Please, before our collective memory fades, I just want us to be honest with ourselves and present an unsanitized version of how they pulled off this war. I can guarantee you the revisionists will make sure the real truth will not enter the history books.

Children born when the war began started second grade this month.

Kids who were eleven in 2003 are now old enough to join up and get killed in Iraq in a "non-combat capacity."

They'll never understand how we got here if we don't.

So let me state this clearly: This war was aided and abetted by a) liberals who were afraid to stick their necks out and thus remained silent; and b) liberals who actually said they believed Colin Powell's cartoon presentation at the U.N. and then went against their better judgment by publicly offering their support for the invasion of Iraq.

First, there were those 29 (turncoat) Democratic senators who voted for the war. Then there was the embarrassing display of reporters who couldn't wait to be "embedded" and go for a joy ride on a Bradley tank.

But my real despair lies with the people I counted on for strong opposition to this madness -- but who left the rest of us alone, out on a limb, as we tried to stop the war.

In March of 2003, to be a public figure speaking out against the war was considered instant career suicide. Take the Dixie Chicks as Exhibit A. Their lead singer, Natalie Maines, uttered just one sentence of criticism -- and their career was effectively dead and buried at that moment. Bruce Springsteen spoke out in their defense, and a Colorado DJ was fired for refusing to not play their songs. That was about it. Crickets everywhere else.

Then MSNBC fired the only nightly critic of the war -- the television legend, Phil Donahue. No one at the network -- or any network -- spoke up on his behalf. There would never again be a Phil Donahue show. (Little did GE know that, when they soon filled that 8pm hour with a sports guy by the name of Keith Olbermann, they would end up with the war's most brilliant and fiercest critic, night after night after night.) There were a few others -- Bill Maher, Janeane Garofalo, Tim Robbins and Seymour Hersh -- who weren't afraid to speak the truth. But where was everyone else? Where were all those supposed liberal voices in the media?

Instead, this is what we were treated to back in 2003 and 2004:

**** Al Franken**, who said he "reluctantly" was "a supporter of the war against Saddam." And six months into the war Al was still saying, "There were reasons to go to war against Iraq ... I was very ambivalent about it but I still don't know if it was necessarily wrong (to go to war)."

**** Nicholas Kristof**, columnist for the *New York Times*, who attacked me and wrote a column comparing me to the nutty right-wingers who claimed Hillary had Vince Foster killed. He said people like me were "polarizing the political cesspool," and he chastised anyone who dared call Bush's reasons for going to war in Iraq "lies."

**** Howell Raines**, editor-in-chief of the "liberal" *New York Times*, who was, according to former *Times* editor Doug Frantz, "eager to have articles that supported the war-mongering out of Washington ... He discouraged pieces that were at odds with the administration's position on Iraq's supposed weapons of mass destruction and alleged links of al-Qaeda." The book "Hard News" reported that "according to half a dozen sources within the *Times*, Raines wanted to prove once and for all that he wasn't editing the paper in a way that betrayed his liberal beliefs..."

**** Bill Keller**, at the time a *New York Times* columnist, who wrote: "We reluctant hawks may disagree among ourselves about the most compelling logic for war -- protecting America, relieving oppressed Iraqis or reforming the Middle East -- but we generally agree that the logic for standing pat does not hold. ... we are hard pressed to see an alternative that is not built on wishful thinking."

(The *New York Times* is so left-wing that when Raines retired, they replaced him with... Keller.)

**** The New Yorker**, the magazine for really smart liberals, found its editor-in-chief, **David Remnick**, supporting the war on its pages: "History will not easily excuse us if, by deciding not to decide, we defer a reckoning with an aggressive totalitarian leader who intends not only to develop weapons of mass destruction but also to use them. ... a return to a hollow pursuit of containment will be the most dangerous option of all." (To cover its ass, the New Yorker had another editor, Rick Hertzberg, write an anti-war editorial as a rebuttal.)

Some of the above have recanted their early support of the war. The *Times* fired its WMD correspondent and apologized to its readers. Al Franken has been a great Senator. Kristof now writes nice columns ([check out last Sunday's](#)).

But the support of the war by these leading liberals and the majority of the Democrats in the Senate made it safe for the Right to let loose a vicious and unchecked tirade of hate and threats on anyone (including myself) who dared to step out of line. It was not uncommon to hear the media describe me as "un-American," "anti-American," "aiding the terrorists," and being a "traitor."

Here are just a couple of examples of what was said about me over the airwaves by two of the nation's leading conservative commentators:

"Let me just tell you what I'm thinking. I'm thinking about killing Michael Moore, and I'm wondering if I could kill him myself, or if I would need to hire somebody to do it. No, I think I could. I think he could be looking me in the eye, you know, and I could just be choking the life out -- is this wrong? I stopped wearing my 'What Would Jesus Do' band, and I've lost all sense of right and wrong now. I used to be able to say, 'Yeah, I'd kill Michael Moore,' and then I'd see the little band: 'What Would Jesus Do?' And then I'd realize, 'Oh, you wouldn't kill Michael Moore. Or at least you wouldn't choke him to death.' And you know, well, I'm not sure." (Glenn Beck)

And:

"Well, I want to kill Michael Moore. Is that all right? All right. And I don't believe in capital punishment. That's just a joke on Moore." (Bill O'Reilly)

(Ironically, O'Reilly made his threat/joke the night after Janet Jackson's breast was bared at the Super Bowl -- which got CBS fined over half a million dollars because, you know, nipples are far more frightening than death threats.)

So that's how I'll personally remember the early war years: living with a real and present danger caused by the hate whipped up by right-wing radio and TV. (I've been advised not to recount certain specific incidents that happened to me, as it would only encourage other crazy people.)

So I dealt with it. And I'm still here. And I know many of you went through your own crap, standing up against the war at school, or work, or at Thanksgiving dinner, taking your own blows for simply saying what was the truth.

But how much easier it would have been for all of us if the liberal establishment had stood with us? We didn't own a daily newspaper, or a magazine with a circulation in the millions. We didn't have our own TV show or network. We weren't invited on shows like "Meet the Press," because they simply could not allow our voice to be heard.

The media watchdog group FAIR reported that in the three weeks after the war started, the CBS Evening News allowed only one anti-war voice on their show -- and that was on *one night* in *one soundbite* (and that was four seconds of me in a line from my Oscar speech) -- even though in March of 2003 our anti-war numbers were in the millions (remember the huge demonstrations in hundreds of cities?). We were around 30% of the country according to most polls (that's nearly 100 million Americans!) and yet we had no way to communicate with each other aside from through the Nation and a few websites like CommonDreams.org and Truth-Out.org.

But that was no way to build a huge mass movement of Middle Americans to oppose the war. Unless you had just lucked out and been handed an Oscar on live television in front of a gazillion people where you had 45 seconds to say something before they cut you off and booed you off the stage ([hahahaha](#)), you had no public platform. (Jeez, I sure did get booed a lot that year: simply walking through an airport, or eating dinner in a restaurant, or sitting at a Laker game where they suddenly put me up on the Jumbotron and the place went so angry-crazy that Larry David, who was sitting next to me, felt that maybe for his own safety he should perhaps slide a few seats down or go get us a couple of wieners. Instead, he stuck by my side -- and his skillful ninja moves got us out of there alive after the game.)

I know it's hard to remember, but when this war started, there was no [YouTube](#), no [Facebook](#), no [Twitter](#), no way for you to bypass the media lords so you could have your own friggin' say.

Too bad for the bastards, those days are over.

The next time around, it won't be so easy to shut up a country girl band or try to silence someone while he accepts his little gold statue -- or completely ignore the millions of citizens in the streets.

So now we can hope that one of our wars is over. Too bad we lost. I hate to lose, don't you? But the fact is, we lost the very day we invaded *a sovereign nation that posed absolutely no threat to us and had nothing to do with 9/11*. We lost lives (over 4,400 of ours, hundreds of thousands of theirs), we lost limbs (a total of 35,000 troops came back with various wounds and disabilities and God knows how many more with mental problems). We lost the money our grandchildren were supposed to live on.

And we lost our soul, who we were, what we stood for as a once-great country -- lost it all. Can we now ask for redemption -- for forgiveness? Can we be... "America" again?

I guess we'll see. The vast majority of the country eventually came around to the Dixie Chicks' position. And we elected an anti-Iraq-war guy by the name of Barack Hussein Obama.

But, please, promise yourselves never to forget how our country went crazy 7 1/2 years ago -- even though, to many people at the time, it seemed completely normal. And I'm here to tell you, no matter how much better it's gotten, no matter how normal you may think things are now, we're still halfway nuts. Just listen to the new batch of "sensible pundits" as they start to beat the drums about what we should do to Iran. One war down, one (or two or three) to go.

C'mon, Mr. President, not one more kid needs to die overseas wearing a uniform with our flag on it. We can't win like this. Let's dig a few thousand wells in Afghanistan, build a few free mosques, leave behind some food and clothing, fix their electrical grid, issue an apology and set up a Facebook page so they can stay in touch with us -- and then let's get the hell out. [Your own National Security Advisor](#) and [your CIA Director](#) have told you there are less than 100 al-Qaeda fighters in the entire country. **100???**

100,000 U.S. troops going after 100 al-Qaeda? Is this a Looney Tunes presentation? "A-ba-dee-a-ba-dee-a-ba-dee -- That's All Folks!" Let's get real. I'm glad one war is "over." But I know how we got there -- and I'm willing now to fight just as hard to stop these other wars if you won't, Mr. Obama.

Your call.

Yours,

Michael Moore
Mike@MichaelMoore.com
[MichaelMoore.com](#)

P.S. Just a thought, Mr. President. Can I ask that you go back and watch this movie I made -- "Fahrenheit 9/11." There might be some answers there. I give you my permission to download it for free by going to this site: TorrentHound.com. Don't tell the studio I said it was ok! They've only made a half a billion \$\$ on it so far.

P.P.S. To everyone on my list: Thanks to your thousands of generous donations, we've raised over \$60,000 for the Muslim community center near Ground Zero. This has made news around the world, that there are Americans who believe in our stated American principles.

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Michael Moore is an activist, author, and filmmaker. See more of his work at his website MichaelMoore.com

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Jeremy Scahill: Blackwater's Black Ops

Blackwater's Black Ops

by Jeremy Scahill [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 16, 2010 | The Nation | CommonDreams

Over the past several years, entities closely linked to the private security firm Blackwater have provided intelligence, training and security services to US and foreign governments as well as several multinational corporations, including Monsanto, Chevron, the Walt Disney Company, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines and banking giants Deutsche Bank and Barclays, according to documents obtained by *The Nation*. Blackwater's work for corporations and government agencies was contracted using two companies owned by Blackwater's owner and founder, Erik Prince: Total Intelligence Solutions and the Terrorism Research Center (TRC). Prince is listed as the chairman of both companies in internal company documents, which show how the web of companies functions as a highly coordinated operation. Officials from Total Intelligence, TRC and Blackwater (which now calls itself Xe Services) did not respond to numerous requests for comment for this article.

One of the most incendiary details in the documents is that Blackwater, through Total Intelligence, sought to become the "intel arm" of Monsanto, offering to provide operatives to infiltrate activist groups organizing against the multinational biotech firm.

Governmental recipients of intelligence services and counterterrorism training from Prince's companies include the Kingdom of Jordan, the Canadian military and the Netherlands police, as well as several US military bases, including Fort Bragg, home of the elite Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), and Fort Huachuca, where military interrogators are trained, according to the documents. In addition, Blackwater worked through the companies for the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the US European Command.

On September 3 the *New York Times* reported that Blackwater had "created a web of more than 30 shell companies or subsidiaries in part to obtain millions of dollars in American government contracts after the security company came under intense criticism for reckless conduct in Iraq." The documents obtained by *The Nation* reveal previously unreported details of several such companies and open a rare window into the sensitive intelligence and security operations Blackwater performs for a range of powerful corporations and government agencies. The new evidence also sheds light on the key roles of several former top CIA officials who went on to work for Blackwater.

The coordinator of Blackwater's covert CIA business, former CIA paramilitary officer Enrique "Ric" Prado, set up a global network of foreign operatives, offering their "deniability" as a "big plus" for potential Blackwater customers, according to company documents. The CIA has long used proxy forces to carry out extralegal actions or to shield US government

involvement in unsavory operations from scrutiny. In some cases, these "deniable" foreign forces don't even know who they are working for. Prado and Prince built up a network of such foreigners while Blackwater was at the center of the CIA's assassination program, beginning in 2004. They trained special missions units at one of Prince's properties in Virginia with the intent of hunting terrorism suspects globally, often working with foreign operatives. A former senior CIA official said the benefit of using Blackwater's foreign operatives in CIA operations was that "you wouldn't want to have American fingerprints on it."

While the network was originally established for use in CIA operations, documents show that Prado viewed it as potentially valuable to other government agencies. In an e-mail in October 2007 with the subject line "Possible Opportunity in DEA—Read and Delete," Prado wrote to a Total Intelligence executive with a pitch for the Drug Enforcement Administration. That executive was an eighteen-year DEA veteran with extensive government connections who had recently joined the firm. Prado explained that Blackwater had developed "a rapidly growing, worldwide network of folks that can do everything from surveillance to ground truth to disruption operations." He added, "These are all foreign nationals (except for a few cases where US persons are the conduit but no longer 'play' on the street), so deniability is built in and should be a big plus."

The executive wrote back and suggested there "may be an interest" in those services. The executive suggested that "one of the best places to start may be the Special Operations Division, (SOD) which is located in Chantilly, VA," telling Prado the name of the special agent in charge. The SOD is a secretive joint command within the Justice Department, run by the DEA. It serves as the command-and-control center for some of the most sensitive counternarcotics and law enforcement operations conducted by federal forces. The executive also told Prado that US attachés in Mexico; Bogotá, Colombia; and Bangkok, Thailand, would potentially be interested in Prado's network. Whether this network was activated, and for what customers, cannot be confirmed. A former Blackwater employee who worked on the company's CIA program declined to comment on Prado's work for the company, citing its classified status.

In November 2007 officials from Prince's companies developed a pricing structure for security and intelligence services for private companies and wealthy individuals. One official wrote that Prado had the capacity to "develop infrastructures" and "conduct ground-truth and security activities." According to the pricing chart, potential customers could hire Prado and other Blackwater officials to operate in the United States and globally: in Latin America, North Africa, francophone countries, the Middle East, Europe, China, Russia, Japan, and Central and Southeast Asia. A four-man team headed by Prado for countersurveillance in the United States cost \$33,600 weekly, while "safehouses" could be established for \$250,000, plus operational costs. Identical services were offered globally. For \$5,000 a day, clients could hire Prado or former senior CIA officials Cofer Black and Robert Richer for "representation" to national "decision-makers." Before joining Blackwater, Black, a twenty-eight-year CIA veteran, ran the agency's counterterrorism center, while Richer was the agency's deputy director of operations. (Neither Black nor Richer currently works for the company.)

As Blackwater became embroiled in controversy following the Nisour Square massacre, Prado set up his own company, Constellation Consulting Group (CCG), apparently taking some of Blackwater's covert CIA work with him, though he maintained close ties to his former employer. In an e-mail to a Total Intelligence executive in February 2008, Prado wrote that he "recently had major success in developing capabilities in Mali [Africa] that are of extreme interest to our major sponsor and which will soon launch a substantial effort via my small shop." He requested Total Intelligence's help in analyzing the "North Mali/Niger terrorist problem."

In October 2009 Blackwater executives faced a crisis when they could not account for their government-issued Secure Telephone Unit, which is used by the CIA, the National Security Agency and other military and intelligence services for secure communications. A flurry of e-mails were sent around as personnel from various Blackwater entities tried to locate the device. One former Blackwater official wrote that because he had left the company it was "not really my problem," while another declared, "I have no 'dog in this fight.'" Eventually, Prado stepped in, e-mailing the Blackwater officials to "pass my number" to the "OGA POC," meaning the Other Government Agency (parlance for CIA) Point of Contact.

What relationship Prado's CCG has with the CIA is not known. An early version of his company's website boasted that "CCG professionals have already conducted operations on five continents, and have proven their ability to meet the most demanding client needs" and that the company has the "ability to manage highly-classified contracts." CCG, the site said,

"is uniquely positioned to deliver services that no other company can, and can deliver results in the most remote areas with little or no outside support." Among the services advertised were "Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence (human and electronic), Unconventional Military Operations, Counterdrug Operations, Aviation Services, Competitive Intelligence, Denied Area Access...and Paramilitary Training."

The Nation has previously reported on Blackwater's work for the CIA and JSOC in Pakistan. New documents reveal a history of activity relating to Pakistan by Blackwater. Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto worked with the company when she returned to Pakistan to campaign for the 2008 elections, according to the documents. In October 2007, when media reports emerged that Bhutto had hired "American security," senior Blackwater official Robert Richer wrote to company executives, "We need to watch this carefully from a number of angles. If our name surfaces, the Pakistani press reaction will be very important. How that plays through the Muslim world will also need tracking." Richer wrote that "we should be prepared to [sic] a communique from an affiliate of Al-Qaida if our name surfaces (BW). That will impact the security profile." Clearly a word is missing in the e-mail or there is a typo that leaves unclear what Richer meant when he mentioned the Al Qaeda communiqué. Bhutto was assassinated two months later. Blackwater officials subsequently scheduled a meeting with her family representatives in Washington, in January 2008.

Through Total Intelligence and the Terrorism Research Center, Blackwater also did business with a range of multinational corporations. According to internal Total Intelligence communications, biotech giant Monsanto—the world's largest supplier of genetically modified seeds—hired the firm in 2008–09. The relationship between the two companies appears to have been solidified in January 2008 when Total Intelligence chair Cofer Black traveled to Zurich to meet with Kevin Wilson, Monsanto's security manager for global issues.

After the meeting in Zurich, Black sent an e-mail to other Blackwater executives, including to Prince and Prado at their Blackwater e-mail addresses. Black wrote that Wilson "understands that we can span collection from internet, to reach out, to boots on the ground on legit basis protecting the Monsanto [brand] name.... Ahead of the curve info and insight/heads up is what he is looking for." Black added that Total Intelligence "would develop into acting as intel arm of Monsanto." Black also noted that Monsanto was concerned about animal rights activists and that they discussed how Blackwater "could have our person(s) actually join [activist] group(s) legally." Black wrote that initial payments to Total Intelligence would be paid out of Monsanto's "generous protection budget" but would eventually become a line item in the company's annual budget. He estimated the potential payments to Total Intelligence at between \$100,000 and \$500,000. According to documents, Monsanto paid Total Intelligence \$127,000 in 2008 and \$105,000 in 2009.

Reached by telephone and asked about the meeting with Black in Zurich, Monsanto's Wilson initially said, "I'm not going to discuss it with you." In a subsequent e-mail to *The Nation*, Wilson confirmed he met Black in Zurich and that Monsanto hired Total Intelligence in 2008 and worked with the company until early 2010. He denied that he and Black discussed infiltrating animal rights groups, stating "there was no such discussion." He claimed that Total Intelligence only provided Monsanto "with reports about the activities of groups or individuals that could pose a risk to company personnel or operations around the world which were developed by monitoring local media reports and other publicly available information. The subject matter ranged from information regarding terrorist incidents in Asia or kidnappings in Central America to scanning the content of activist blogs and websites." Wilson asserted that Black told him Total Intelligence was "a completely separate entity from Blackwater."

Monsanto was hardly the only powerful corporation to enlist the services of Blackwater's constellation of companies. The Walt Disney Company hired Total Intelligence and TRC to do a "threat assessment" for potential film shoot locations in Morocco, with former CIA officials Black and Richer reaching out to their former Moroccan intel counterparts for information. The job provided a "good chance to impress Disney," one company executive wrote. How impressed Disney was is not clear; in 2009 the company paid Total Intelligence just \$24,000.

Total Intelligence and TRC also provided intelligence assessments on China to Deutsche Bank. "The Chinese technical counterintelligence threat is one of the highest in the world," a TRC analyst wrote, adding, "Many four and five star hotel rooms and restaurants are live-monitored with both audio and video" by Chinese intelligence. He also said that computers, PDAs and other electronic devices left unattended in hotel rooms could be cloned. Cellphones using the Chinese networks, the analyst wrote, could have their microphones remotely activated, meaning they could operate as permanent listening

devices. He concluded that Deutsche Bank reps should "bring no electronic equipment into China." Warning of the use of female Chinese agents, the analyst wrote, "If you don't have women coming onto you all the time at home, then you should be suspicious if they start coming onto you when you arrive in China." For these and other services, the bank paid Total Intelligence \$70,000 in 2009.

TRC also did background checks on Libyan and Saudi businessmen for British banking giant Barclays. In February 2008 a TRC executive e-mailed Prado and Richer revealing that Barclays asked TRC and Total Intelligence for background research on the top executives from the Saudi Binladin Group (SBG) and their potential "associations/connections with the Royal family and connections with Osama bin Laden." In his report, Richer wrote that SBG's chair, Bakr Mohammed bin Laden, "is well and favorably known to both arab and western intelligence service[s]" for cooperating in the hunt for Osama bin Laden. Another SBG executive, Sheikh Saleh bin Laden, is described by Richer as "a very savvy businessman" who is "committed to operating with full transparency to Saudi's security services" and is considered "the most vehement within the extended BL family in terms of criticizing UBL's actions and beliefs."

In August Blackwater and the State Department reached a \$42 million settlement for hundreds of violations of US export control regulations. Among the violations cited was the unauthorized export of technical data to the Canadian military. Meanwhile, Blackwater's dealings with Jordanian officials are the subject of a federal criminal prosecution of five former top Blackwater executives. The Jordanian government paid Total Intelligence more than \$1.6 million in 2009.

Some of the training Blackwater provided to Canadian military forces was in Blackwater/TRC's "Mirror Image" course, where trainees live as a mock Al Qaeda cell in an effort to understand the mindset and culture of insurgents. Company literature describes it as "a classroom and field training program designed to simulate terrorist recruitment, training, techniques and operational tactics." Documents show that in March 2009 Blackwater/TRC spent \$6,500 purchasing local tribal clothing in Afghanistan as well as assorted "propaganda materials—posters, Pakistan Urdu maps, etc." for Mirror Image, and another \$9,500 on similar materials this past January in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

According to internal documents, in 2009 alone the Canadian military paid Blackwater more than \$1.6 million through TRC. A Canadian military official praised the program in a letter to the center, saying it provided "unique and valid cultural awareness and mission specific deployment training for our soldiers in Afghanistan," adding that it was "a very effective and operationally current training program that is beneficial to our mission."

This past summer Erik Prince put Blackwater up for sale and moved to Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. But he doesn't seem to be leaving the shadowy world of security and intelligence. He says he moved to Abu Dhabi because of its "great proximity to potential opportunities across the entire Middle East, and great logistics," adding that it has "a friendly business climate, low to no taxes, free trade and no out of control trial lawyers or labor unions. It's pro-business and opportunity." It also has no extradition treaty with the United States.

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Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Ivan Eland: Has US Empire Benefited the World?

Has US Empire Benefited the World?

by Ivan Eland [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 14, 2010 | Consortium News | CommonDreams

Editor's Note: Despite the stunning decline now facing the United States – caused in large part by imperial overreach – the chief propagandists of empire continue to dominate the capital's discourse, insisting that Washington cannot step back from playing globo-cop.

In this guest essay, the Independent Institute's Ivan Eland dissects the chief premise of this argument, that American maintenance of international order – like the British imperial system that preceded it – is vital to the world's well-being:

In a [recent column](#), Thomas Friedman, probably the most influential “internationalist” — read: proponent of U.S. interventionism in faraway places — has finally discovered that the United States must soon turn inward and put domestic economic growth first because of its massive public debt, huge federal budget deficit, and looming fiscal crisis caused by a dramatic automatic escalation in entitlements spending.

Eureka, the foreign policy rapture has begun!

The real problem with Friedman's piece is not him reaching a conclusion that was obvious even before the onset of the Great Recession of 2008, but that he laments how dangerous the world will be without the steady guiding hand of the United States.

Friedman writes, and most Americans will be eager to believe, that the diminished interventionism of the now “frugal superpower” will be bad for the world because:

“[T]he most unique and important feature of U.S. foreign policy over the last century has been the degree to which America's diplomats and naval, air, and ground forces provided global public goods — from open seas to open trade and from containment to counterterrorism — that benefited many others besides us.

“U.S. power has been the key force maintaining global stability, and providing global governance, for the last 70 years. That role will not disappear, but it will certainly shrink.”

Then Friedman, whose muse is Michael Mandelbaum of Johns Hopkins University, quotes Mandelbaum as opining:

“When Britain could no longer provide global governance, the United States stepped in to replace it. No country now stands ready to replace the United States, so the loss to international peace and prosperity has the potential to be greater as America pulls back than when Britain did.”

But have the British Empire and the American Empire been all that good for the world? The world somehow got by before they came along.

The American public and many of its foreign policy experts praise the British Empire for ensuring stability, when they probably should examine its violent and often brutal colonial subjugation of what it regarded as inferior races for economic gain.

Adolf Hitler admired the British Empire, but thought it too brutal.

As for the American Empire, it is littered with foreign policy interventions that caused more international problems than they solved.

American entry into World War I led to a string of disasters that the world has never fully recovered from. Without the decisive U.S. entry into the first European war in its history in contravention of the Monroe Doctrine, a win by Germany, then merely a constitutional monarchy with a bombastic king, in a 10-round decision would have led only to the incremental adjustment of European borders to German advantage.

Instead, U.S. entry to tip the balance of the war inadvertently brought about an allied victory that rubbed Germany's nose in the dirt — demanding a war guilt clause for a conflict in which blame should have been shared across Europe, requiring harsh reparations on an economically drained nation, and deposing Kaiser Wilhelm II.

The latter demand paved the way for the rise of Adolf Hitler, who exploited the war guilt clause, reparations, and the economic depression to rise to power and attempt to conquer Europe. World War II was merely a resumption of World War I two decades later.

The likely U.S. entry into World War I also kept the Russian provisional government (succeeding the fallen czar) involved in the conflict — increasing the probability of winning and providing much needed aid to do so.

Had the Russian government sued for peace earlier, Vladimir Lenin could not have used the unpopular war to bring a communist government to power. The post-World War II Cold War was borne out of the ashes of World War I.

During that Cold War, the U.S. created the national security state, the first large peacetime army in American history, and a far-flung empire of military bases, unneeded alliances (especially after the advent of nuclear weapons to protect the homeland), foreign military interventions, and large amounts of foreign aid.

Instead of spending much money and many lives (in brushfire wars in the developing world) to conduct an expansive worldwide Cold War against communism, a cheaper approach to accelerate the Soviet Empire's collapse — as many empires have fallen over the course of history, by financial exhaustion — would have been smarter.

With a less interventionist and less costly U.S. foreign policy, Soviet finances would have been depleted even faster than they were by the costs of providing aid and governance to basket cases they took over in the developing world.

During the Cold War, the U.S. also encouraged the spread of radical Islam around the world to counter godless communism, including providing aid to the anti-Soviet mujahedeen to “give the USSR another Vietnam.” As an unintended consequence of supporting such Islamic militancy, the U.S. created the biggest threat to its homeland since the War of 1812 — al-Qaeda.

Indirectly, the U.S. also helped encourage another strand of radical Islam in Iran. In 1953, it helped overthrow the democratically elected Mossadegh government in Iran, which led to the restoration of the autocratic shah. Radical Islam has gained support in many Muslim countries because the only dissent that is permitted against authoritarian governments is in the mosques.

The United States has supported such autocrats, for example, the shah's Iran and Egypt's Mubarak today. The shah's oppression led to the radical Khomeini revolution and to Iran being a problem to its neighbors.

The United States then helped Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran as a counterweight and eventually built up another future enemy. And these are only a few of the many examples of ill-fated U.S. meddling in faraway, non-strategic countries and regions of the world.

Of course, as Friedman alludes, the United States created the system of open trade, yet trade happens naturally and U.S. efforts merely institutionalized it. An era of free trade had preceded restricted markets during World War I and the Great Depression.

But to accurately portray U.S. interventionist empire-building, especially after World War II, is not to “always blame America first.” In fact, disagreeing with the government’s foreign policy is different from hating American’s society and way of life.

The founders of the United States, who are regularly idolized by most Americans, would roll over in their graves at the mutation of their traditional, peaceful, and restrained foreign policy into a militaristic, globe-girdling empire that is exhausting the country economically and ruining the republic that they created.

Ivan Eland is Director of the [Center on Peace & Liberty](#) at The Independent Institute. Dr. Eland has spent 15 years working for Congress on national security issues, including stints as an investigator for the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Principal Defense Analyst at the Congressional Budget Office. His books include [The Empire Has No Clothes: U.S. Foreign Policy Exposed](#), and [Putting “Defense” Back into U.S. Defense Policy](#).

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Wednesday, September 15, 2010

[We Need Your Ideas: A Call for Direct Action in the Climate Movement](#)

An open letter from the Rainforest Action Network, Greenpeace USA, and 350.org: What will it take to finally get serious about climate change?

We Need Your Ideas: A Call for Direct Action in the Climate Movement

by Bill McKibben, Phil Radford, & Becky Tarbotton [article link](#) [article link](#)
September 14, 2010 | YES! Magazine | CommonDreams

Dear Friends,

God, what a summer. Federal scientists have concluded that we've just come through the warmest six months, the warmest year, and the warmest decade in human history. Nineteen nations have set [new all-time temperature records](#); the mercury in Pakistan reached 129 degrees, the hottest temperature ever seen in Asia. And there's nothing abstract about those numbers, not with Moscow choking on smoke from its epic heat wave and fires, not with Pakistan half washed away from its [unprecedented flooding](#).

But that's just the half of it. It's also the summer when the U.S. Senate decided to keep intact its 20-year bipartisan record of doing nothing about global warming. Global warming is no act of God. We're up against the most profitable and powerful industries on earth: the companies racking up record profits from fossil fuels. And we're not going to beat them by asking nicely. We're going to have to [build a movement](#), a movement much bigger than anything we've built before, a movement

that can push back against the financial power of Big Oil and Big Coal. That movement is our only real hope, and we need your help to plot its future.

We've got some immediate and crucial priorities. For instance, groups around the world are joining together on 10/10/10 for a [Global Work Party](#), demonstrating that we already know many of the solutions to the climate crisis. That will be a good day not just to put up solar panels, but also to shame our political leaders, to say to them, "We're getting to work. What about you?" Meanwhile, around the country, lawyers and community groups are doing yeoman's work fighting off new coal plants, activists are persuading banks to stop loaning to corporate villains, city councils are figuring out how to make their towns more efficient and resilient. This is the basic work of any movement, the foundation on which hope for long-term progress rests.

But necessary as such efforts are, they're not sufficient. We're making progress, but not as fast as the physical situation is deteriorating. Time is not on our side, so we've concluded that going forward **mass direct action must play a bigger role in this movement**, as it eventually did in the [suffrage movement](#), the civil-rights movement, and [the fight against corporate globalization](#). Even now, environmentalists in places like the coalfields of Appalachia have been putting these tactics to good use, albeit in small ways. (In the spring of 2009, our three groups worked with others to pull off a large-scale action outside the congressional power plant in D.C. that resulted in a promise that it would cease to burn coal.) History suggests, in other words, that one way to effectively communicate both to the general public and to our leaders the urgency of the crisis is to put our bodies on the line.

Nobody can predict which one event will trigger social change. Paul Revere was not the only rider to warn of the British advance, and many people refused to move to the back of the bus before Rosa Parks. But we do know two things. First, that we must act with unity, and second, many minds working together are likely to be smarter. So we're asking for your help. As you go about your other work on behalf of the planet and its diverse communities, **think about the possibilities for direct action, and write them down and send them to us**. Here are a few thoughts to guide you.

- * Our actions must be infused with the spirit of [Gandhi](#), Martin Luther King Jr., and other peaceful protesters before us. No violence, no property damage.

- * We need large actions, with many members of the general public. Think hundreds and thousands. So don't concentrate on the kind of tactics that only a few hardy specialists can carry out; we're not going to have hundreds of people rappelling or scuba diving.

- * We don't think for a minute that we can actually physically shut down the fossil-fuel economy for any meaningful period; it's too big. We need to aim for effective symbolic targets—say, dirty, old coal-fired power plants—and use them to make clear the need and opportunity to cut carbon fast.

- * Our actions must be rooted in the communities where they are held and be organized hand in hand with local groups and activists.

- * Our tactics need to engage onlookers, not alienate them. We have to have effective ways of keeping provocateurs and incendiaries at a distance, and attracting the kind of people who actually influence the rest of the public. Discipline will matter.

- * We need to be transparent and open in our planning, not reliant on secrecy. We'll need to do our work certain that law enforcement is looking over our shoulders; our method can't be surprise.

- * Beauty counts. We're fighting for the beauty in the world that's being stolen by our adversaries, and at the same time we're aiming for hearts and minds.

- * We don't have unlimited resources. The cost and complexity of these kinds of actions can mount quickly. As with all things environmental, frugality and simplicity are virtues.

Note that though all of our groups have international operations, we're only thinking about America right now. That's for three reasons. One, in some parts of the world activists have already done great work that can teach us a lot. Two, America really has to show some leadership, since we're historically the biggest cause of climate change. And three, though we Americans face real and sobering risks when we engage in direct action, people doing the same things in many other nations can be locked up for decades or worse; in those places, other tactics will have to suffice.

Note too that though this letter comes from just three environmental groups, we want this fight open to everyone. We'll happily work with any organization that shares our goals and tactics as plans go forward; in fact, we think that breaking down boundaries between groups is key to any chance at success. We'll do our best to reach out, but please make sure you let us know you want to be involved.

We've set up a special email address for ideas: **climate.ideas@gmail.com** By late autumn, we hope we'll have been able to mine those ideas and start coming up with coherent plans for actions starting next spring.

We know this strategy won't appeal to all of you. That's fine; there are a thousand other useful ways to help, and we don't want to distract anyone from other work they're doing. But if you have ideas, send them in. It's clear to us that this is going to be a battle for the long haul, and we're going to need to be creative and committed. Thanks much for being a big part of it.

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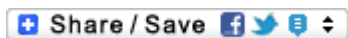
Phil Radford is Executive Director of [Greenpeace USA](#).

Becky Tarbotton is Executive Director of the [Rainforest Action Network](#).

Bill McKibben is co-founder and global organizer for [350.org](#).

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Tuesday, September 14, 2010

[Stephen Lendman: Obama Declares Another National Emergency When None Exists](#)

Obama Declares Another National Emergency When None Exists

By Stephen Lendman [article link](#)

September 14, 2010 | CounterCurrents

Well, not exactly. In fact, he renewed, for the second, time, the Bush administration's 9/11 one, a White House press release saying:

"Letter from the President on the Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to Certain Terrorist Attack"

"Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 USC 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the Federal Register and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. Consistent with this provision, I have sent to the Federal Register the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, is to continue in effect for an additional year."

"The terrorist threat that led to the declaration on September 14, 2001, of a national emergency continues. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue (it) in effect after September 14, 2010, the national emergency with respect to the terrorist threat."

In fact, no threat existed nine years ago or today. Declaring one, however, lets Washington maraud globally and at home, committing state terror. It's the only kind that matters, given America's destructive power and intent to wage it as part of the nation's permanent war agenda. Peace for this country is anathema, a topic two previous articles addressed, accessed through the following links: *America's Permanent War Agenda* [article link](#) *The Case for War: The Iron Mountain Report* [article link](#)

Continuity of Government (COG) Authority

An earlier article explained it in detail, including its historical roots, accessed through the following link: *Continuity of Government: Coup d'Etat Authority in America* [article link](#)

Initially planned and developed under Ronald Reagan, it's renewed annually, Obama's 9/10/10 "Continuation" extending it another year, a process repeating ad infinitum despite no justification for doing it.

COG created coup d'etat authority in America, its pretext being:

"a coordinated effort within the Federal Government's executive branch to ensure that National Essential Functions continue to be performed during a Catastrophic Emergency."

If implemented, the president and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will have unprecedented police state powers to declare martial law without congressional approval - to rule extrajudicially, free from constitutional constraints. As a result, personal freedoms will be suppressed for our own good, replaced by tyranny, the kind of America no one wants but one day may arrive full blown, ready or not.

Other Obama-Declared National Emergencies

Remember last year's Swine Flu "threat." The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global pandemic affecting "as many as two billion people (over) the next two years," calling the virus "unstoppable." It was falsified hype. Yet, on April 26, 2009, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a "Determination that a Public Emergency Exists," and DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano "issued a public health emergency declaration" on April 27.

Then on October 24, Obama declared a "National Emergency with Respect to the 2009 H1N1 Influenza Pandemic," although none existed. Though none of what was feared happened, it gave Washington, state and local governments unprecedented power to order mass inoculations, those refusing subject quarantines, fines, or imprisonment.

In June 2010, S. 3480: Protecting Cyberspace as a National Asset Act was introduced, referred to committee, approved unanimously, but so far not enacted. Called an Internet Kill Switch bill, it empowers the president (on national security grounds) to shut down the Internet, disconnect its networks, and force web sites, blogs, providers, search engines and software companies to "immediately comply with any (DHS) emergency measure or action," or face fines or closure.

In other words, on the pretext of a national emergency, true or false, the Executive may shut down the media's last free and open space, quashing First Amendment freedoms, Obama in May 2009 saying:

"In this information age, one of your greatest assets - in our case, our ability to communicate to a wide range of supporters through the Internet - could also be one of your greatest vulnerabilities, (adding that) America's economic prosperity....depend(s) on cybersecurity, (at the same time claiming) Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups (might) unleash a cyber attack on our country (by) a few key strokes on a computer - a weapon of mass destruction."

The Kill Switch threat remains, perhaps only after declaring a cyber emergency. Anyone disobeying will be fined or imprisoned, even if no danger exists. It shows presidential excesses greatly imperil our freedoms, a risk always to remember and fear. Here's why.

National Emergency Powers

In August 2007, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) prepared a "National Emergency Powers" report for members of Congress, explaining what can be used in times of "crisis, exigency, or emergency circumstances (other than natural disasters, war, or near-war situations)."

These powers may be explicit or implied by the Constitution, or "inferred from or specified by statute." Yet limits exist, or should, the Constitution allowing no suspension of its provisions at times of crisis, even though, in fact, presidents are de facto dictators during wars. It was true for Lincoln, Wilson, Roosevelt, Truman, and others who followed, especially post-9/11.

Yet, since 1976, presidents have been subject to procedural formalities in using statutorily delegated emergency authority. Or that's how it's supposed to be by law, if not in fact.

Under the National Emergencies Act (50 USC 1601-1651), Congress may check open-ended presidential national emergency powers, limiting them to two years, subject to renewal. It also requires the formal declaration of an emergency, specifying under what statutory authority, Congress then has final say on whether it's implemented. Again, that's how it's supposed to work.

If exercised, presidents may:

- seize property;
- organize and control the means of production;
- seize commodities;
- deploy military forces abroad and now at home;
- declare martial law;
- seize and control all transportation, communications, and commerce;
- restrict travel, and
- in most ways control the lives of US citizens, including arresting and detaining them.

Some analysts say the Constitution only delegates Congress emergency powers under Article I, section 8, granting it authority to "provide for the common Defense and general Welfare....regulate Commerce....declare War, (organize and arm a) Militia," as well as the "necessary and proper" clause empowering it to enact laws required to exercise these powers, and all others.

Yet presidents have assumed them on their own despite legislative constraints, most recently post-9/11 through Executive Orders, National Security Presidential Directives, and other means, including George Bush claiming "Unitary Executive" powers, what Chalmers Johnson called a "ball-faced assertion of presidential supremacy dressed up in legal mumbo jumbo," but getting away with it because Congress and the courts didn't constrain him.

What then is an emergency? In simplest terms, whatever the president says it is, having broad latitude to take advantage without implemented checks and balances countermanding him. Merriam-Webster calls it "an unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action."

During 1973 congressional hearings, the following description was offered:

"It denotes the existence of conditions of varying nature, intensity and duration, which are perceived to threaten life or well-being beyond tolerable limits."

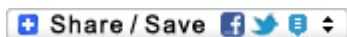
Fair enough, but who's to decide or prove if true, and if so, does it warrant supreme presidential power to address? Laws exist for a reason - to maintain order, curb excesses, and prevent abuses of authority. No emergency should dismiss them for expediency. Doing so risks an even greater one, dictatorial rule over democratic freedoms, too valued to let one leader subvert, especially if the declared threat is bogus.

Post-9/11, police state powers seized and enacted are a reminder of what never should be allowed to happen but did. They continue to haunt us, threaten to worsen, and Obama's September 10 COG authority renewal should alert everyone to the danger.

Perhaps martial law and suspension of constitutional protections will follow the next declared emergency, whether or not it's real. Abuses of power beget greater ones. It's just a matter of time until the worst arrive unless an alert public is aroused enough to stop them. Once in place, it's too late.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. Also visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the [Progressive Radio News Hour](#) on the [Progressive Radio Network](#) Thursdays at 10AM US Central time and Saturdays and Sundays at noon. All programs are archived for easy listening.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:09 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

[Sarah van Gelder: Resilient Citizens Building Their Own Economic Security](#)

Resilient Citizens Building Their Own Economic Security

Pioneers of the New Normal

by Sarah van Gelder [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 14, 2010 | American Forum | CommonDreams

Americans are facing a troubling reality. The economic recovery they were promised has not materialized. There's growing talk about a "new normal" — a new way of life to take us through a long period of failed recoveries.

There are, indeed, good reasons to believe we won't go back to the old ways. But this new normal doesn't have to be a time of chaos and decline.

Instead, many Americans are building stronger families and communities, rejecting the waste and greed that made our economy implode, and turning instead to self-reliance and the sort of neighborliness that embraces diversities of all sorts.

Why not go back to the consumer ideal that was the foundation of the American Dream? Many who live paycheck to paycheck have lost jobs, homes and hopes for an education, retirement security and belief in a more prosperous future. CEO pay is on the uptick, as are corporate profits. But the anti-tax, anti-regulation fever that enriched some undermined the real wealth of our country: our education system, infrastructure, communities and natural resources. And much of our economy has been outsourced, making it difficult for stimulus spending to get growth going again.

But it's not only a stalled economy that is threatening our future. Leading scientists now say that climate disruption is behind the massive flooding in Pakistan and the record-breaking fires in Russia. Shortages of food, water and energy — with attendant price spikes — along with displacement and migration, are likely, not just abroad, but here in the United States.

As if that wasn't enough, the Gulf oil disaster is showing the limitations of another sort of security we once took for granted: cheap oil. As the easy-to-exploit oil is used up, oil companies are turning to increasingly difficult-to-reach sources of oil. This means we are likely to see still more expensive disasters associated with oil, whether caused by human error — as in the Gulf — or just part of the extraction process, as seen in the communities devastated by mountain-top removal or tar sands exploitation. Analyst and author Michael Klare says we have reached the “Age of Tough Oil,” and every barrel of oil we extract will be more difficult and expensive to get than the last one.

That brings us back to the prospects for an economic recovery. With cheap oil a thing of the past, an economic recovery that increases demand for energy will drive prices even higher. That energy price increase would stall any recovery.

So what are Americans doing about these very real threats to our security?

Some are exploiting citizens' fears for their own political ends, blaming President Obama, immigrants or climate scientists for the bad news. These strategies not only distract us from the real threats, they divide our country while offering nothing that can help solve our challenges.

Others are choosing to ignore or deny the depth of these challenges.

But there are people across the political spectrum, in every part of the country, gathering with friends and neighbors to build sources of security close to home.

These folks are turning lawns into vegetable gardens and organizing their neighbors to start pea patches and farmers' markets. They're getting together with neighbors to swap preserves and skills, and to relearn the skills their grandparents had. They are protecting local resources — water, land, forests and fisheries — that can offer sustenance into the future, and they are starting up energy and weatherization cooperatives.

They're paying off their debt, moving their money out of big corporate banks to local banks and credit unions, and supporting local businesses. As they do, they are freeing themselves from the global corporate economy that moved jobs overseas and fueled the speculation that undermined the real economy of jobs, goods and services. These folks have chosen instead to use their resources to strengthen local economies and the small and medium-sized businesses that are most likely to create the new jobs of the next economy.

These are the pioneers of the new normal, and you can find them building the foundations of a hopeful future in urban centers, small towns and suburbs. Maybe you're one of them.

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Sarah van Gelder is the Executive Editor of [YES! Magazine](#).

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Monday, September 13, 2010

[Caroline Arnold: A World Ruled by Fear and Self-Interest Offers Little Hope](#)

A World Ruled by Fear and Self-Interest Offers Little Hope

by Caroline Arnold [article link](#)

September 12, 2010 | CommonDreams

The front page of the Kent Ravenna (Ohio) Record-Courier 8/30/10 carried a photo of a big black tank - an M113 armored personnel vehicle. The [news story](#) began "Thirteen tons of rolling steel makes up the newest defense the Brimfield Police Department has to keep police officers and the public safe in the event of a serious criminal incident or natural disaster" and continued "The cost to Brimfield taxpayers? Not one cent."

I found something rather poignant about Brimfield acquiring this fearsome-looking but basically toothless old tank. (It has no weapons) But, as the article pointed out, many people are still haunted by the 2005 case in which a terrorist killed three people with an AR-15 assault rifle before he could be apprehended, and see this tank as a means to prevent a recurrence.

And who knows? - it might work, or at least help. But it makes me uneasy: as news, saving taxpayers' money is right up there on our public screens with saving human lives.

I'm bothered by the poverty of our public understandings, meanings and ideals, the mediocrity of our socially- shared beliefs, expectations and hopes. We're running the same old unreliable models of human nature and human society, based on the same old scripts of fear and self-interests, the same old xenophobias of distrust and disdain for people of color or different faiths, for immigrants and poor people, and the same old myths about terrorists & taxes, wars & freedom, guns & security, Social Security & socialism, gays & god - all now computer- enhanced and widely blogged.

In a new book entitled "[The Emperor's New Drugs](#)" Irving Kirsch, argues that antidepressant drugs are based on a faux pharmacological model of how the brain works. He cites evidence showing that drugs like Prozac work primarily as placebos, not by correcting some chemical imbalance in the brain: "The secret of their power lies in such slippery psychological notions as hope, belief and meaning rather than hard chemistry," notes one reviewer.

No doubt beliefs, meanings and hopes - and expectations - play a large role in the effects we experience from medications. Indeed, they underlie all human experience. And almost everything in human society - money, property, nationality, government, politics, economics, science, religion, is based on linguistic models that we agree reflect reality.

Declarative statements like "I am a Democrat" don't just reflect a reality, they create one. And a \$50 bill that declares itself worth fifty dollars, is, as long as we all agree that it is. (This can get out of hand, as it did in Zimbabwe, which in 2009 was printing money in denominations of ten trillion dollars. At that point, everyone agreed it was worthless.)

If the effects we experience from pills are based as much on expectations, belief, hope and meaning as on the chemicals employed, to what extent are our political decisions and interpretations of public policies based on our expectations, beliefs, hopes and meanings about how things work?

It's not a matter of lying. We all lie to ourselves to manage information and make models that fit with the realities we prefer; we lie to others to persuade them to agree with us, or to elicit actions or beliefs we favor. When we don't agree with a proposed model then we presume that the proposer is lying, deliberately making a model to deceive us or cripple our cause.

Do we have either drugs or placebos - or acupuncture or talking cures - that will be effective against metastasizing xenophobia? Can we cure terrorism by spending \$100 billion each year of taxpayers' money on the war in Afghanistan?

The trouble is, although most scripts and models are authentic enough to go where they are intended to go, like a lot of drugs, they have unintended consequences or side-effects, which may be tolerable, or may be deadly.

Our current political models may not be good enough on a planet inhabited by a species that has depleted its fossil fuels in developing conventional, nuclear and cyber-weapons; a species with non-adaptive cultures pursuing self-interests, exploiting and killing one another, unwilling to control its population, and proliferating competing scripts and models of reality as fast as the military industrial complex, politicians and entertainers can generate them.

I'm depressed. I can no longer imagine either pill or placebo, policy or political script that can give meaning to the state of the world today, that offers relief from the pains of war and poverty, and hope for a durable peace and prosperous future for all of mankind. I see little hope of agreeing widely on realities with reasonable chances for leading where we want to go, let alone the expectation of reaching any kind of consensus about where we as humans want to go and how we will share the costs of getting there.

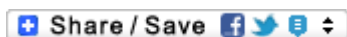
One model suggests that with the \$100 billion a year of our tax money that's now going for war in Afghanistan we could repair and modernize the infrastructure in our cities, invest in education for all children, embark on national search for renewable energy resources, and probably put two million Americans back to work.

Pill or placebo? Fact or fiction? Science or propaganda? As long as we squabble over saving taxpayer's money, racial profiling, or denying an Islamic center in New York and fail to agree on where we want to go, it doesn't matter much.

This column appears in the [Kent Ravenna Record-Courier](#) Sunday Sept 12, 2010.

Before joining Senator John Glenn's Washington staff in 1985, **Caroline Arnold** (csarnold@neo.rr.com) was a teacher, founded a small business, and served three terms on the Kent (OH) Board of Education. In retirement she sits on the boards of Kent Social Services and Family & Community Services in Portage County, Ohio and is principal cellist of the Stow Symphony.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:42 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Susie Day: Glenn Beck Wrecks Second Coming, Offs Jesus

Glenn Beck Wrecks Second Coming, Offs Jesus

by Susie Day [article link](#)

13.09.10 | Monthly Review

(PU) After two thousand years of looking forward to the return of Jesus Christ, Christians were extremely disappointed today to learn that their born-again Lord and Savior had died again, this time at the hands of author, talk-show host, and entrepreneur [Glenn Beck](#). News of the "Messiah-cide" leaked out this morning when Mr. Beck was arraigned in federal district court in Manhattan.

"Go ahead, give me the chair," screamed a flushed and tearful Glenn Beck to the judge, while TV cameras rolled and reporters crowded in. "But I did this country a favor. Americans thought Jesus was about divine justice -- I found out he's for social and economic justice. He wants total socialist global domination over the entire globe. May Day, May Day, there's a coup going down!"

Using a chalkboard to illustrate his points, Mr. Beck drew a goose-stepping stick figure of the Son of God, sporting a Che Guevara mustache and beret. He explained that, according to the plan Jesus had imparted to him, the coming Millennium would entail no Rapture, no eternal damnation; only a "Thousand-Year Plan" of complete societal and material equality. This rampant egalitarianism, surmised Mr. Beck, would destroy the profit motive and, with it, civilization itself.

"You see? Those loaves and fishes?" panted Mr. Beck, beads of sweat popping over his round, pink face as he scrawled overlapping circles to signify the food items. "Jesus gives a bunch of welfare cheats free loaves and free fishes, and the American people lose their homes. He heals the sick, and YOU get socked paying health insurance. He tells you, give away your private property, help marauding foreigners find a better life. But that only destroys the Constitution and your God-given right to get rich. Face it, judge, Jesus doesn't like white people."

Mr. Beck, who was raised Catholic and became a Mormon in 1999, went on to say that, while Americans should still be guaranteed freedom of religion, the freedom of a real-life avatar to dwell among Americans should be severely limited.

"If everybody actually lived in a state of Jesus-endorsed 'love-thy-neighbor-as-thyself' enlightenment, our country's place in the world would go down the toilet," shouted Mr. Beck. "Stand up, America. Don't let some spiritual brown-shirt tell you you're no better than the average Pakistani drone-attack victim. Death is for losers, baby."

Asked to recount the events leading up to the killing, Glenn Beck said that he first learned of Jesus' comeback a few weeks ago, sitting in his living room, after becoming enraged at Rachel Maddow on TV. "I got so mad I kicked the leg off my coffee table. 'Jesus Fucking Christ,' I cried, 'where's a goddamn carpenter when you need one?'"

Mr. Beck then described a sudden radiance that permeated the room, while a longhaired, bearded Middle Eastern man took on physical form. "At first, I thought he was Al Qaeda," said Mr. Beck, "but after he healed the leg back on, I knew."

Mr. Beck spoke of his relationship with Jesus as at first "deeply fulfilling," with Jesus fixing small things around the house in exchange for a mattress in the garage. The two enjoyed moonlit walks on the beach, marshmallow roasts, and tickle-fights. But Mr. Beck began to sense that Jesus was not interested in "the good life" when he refused to put on a three-piece business suit that Mr. Beck had bought for him. "Then the PC-thugs started dropping by. Jesus would hang out in the garage with these weirdoes, talking about supporting gay marriage and getting [Troy Davis](#) off [death row](#). I began to wonder if Jesus was a secret Muslim."

Noticing that Jesus spent hours on the phone, Mr. Beck had the calls traced, and found that most were to environmentalist and civil rights activist Van Jones. "I overheard them say how they were going to drive out the money-changers and abolish the capitalist system. There was lots of giggling, I remember. I thought, my God, how could all those 'WWJD' bracelets be so wrong?"

Finally, Mr. Beck decided to "reclaim the truth and justice movement" and made Jesus a poisoned falafel sandwich. "It was easy," he concluded. "No nails, no violence. He just looked at me sadly. Then he died. Chump."

At first, a tidal wave of rage and disbelief convulsed the nation, as Americans heard Mr. Beck confess that he had inconveniently re-slain a savior who had already been pre-slain for their convenience. Slowly, however, as the hours ticked by and Mr. Beck's testimony streamed live on the Internet and TV, some people came to see a certain wisdom in Mr. Beck's act.

Tea Party member Amy McPherson reflected, "I had wanted Jesus to wash away my sins and save me. But then I thought, what if Mr. Do-Unto-Others wouldn't let me carry my Luger? That's a deal-breaker."

Even presiding judge Marvin Mandible expressed cautious sympathy for Mr. Beck's act. "While the court finds illegality in the re-murdering of a loving spiritual entity, it nevertheless cannot endorse the intent of the aforesaid entity to prevent the court from [refusing to hear cases involving the extraordinary rendition of torture victims](#). Lest we forget, terrorists are pure evil. I don't think Jesus ever got that."

Despite his professed support for the death penalty, Mr. Beck will probably face a sentence of life everlasting.

Susie Day is Assistant Editor of Monthly Review.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:35 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Sunday, September 12, 2010

[Victoria Clark: Pastor Terry Jones is a Product of America's Free Market in Religion](#)

The West's ill-conceived response to the horror of 9/11 has been compounded by men of God spreading fear, hatred and mistrust of the Muslim world

Pastor Terry Jones is a Product of America's Free Market in Religion

by Victoria Clark [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 11, 2010 | The Independent/UK | CommonDreams

It's taken nine years for the Christian West to throw up a cleric as radically, fundamentally bellicose as some of those produced by the Muslim world. The marvel, I would say, is not that it has, and proved beyond reasonable doubt that any and every religion can breed monsters, but that it has not done so earlier.

Pastor Terry Jones of Dove World Outreach Center church in Florida, the Protestant clergyman who thinks marking this ninth anniversary of 9/11 by burning copies of the Koran is a fine idea, may boast a congregation of no more than 50, but there is one thing I'd be prepared to bet on. It won't be his potentially lethal bellicosity that's stopped him attracting a congregation large enough to fill one of those 50,000-seater megachurches. There'll be other, more humdrum reasons for his obscurity until now.

How can I be so sure? A few years ago, while researching a book about the dangerous dovetailing of Armageddon theology with support for hard right-wing Israeli politicians and Israeli expansionism in the West Bank after 9/11, I encountered a number of Pastor Jones clones: alpha male egocentrics who used their pulpits to peddle a deliciously intoxicating cocktail of literal-minded Bible exegesis aimed at forecasting the future, right-wing political punditry, shockingly irresponsible fear-mongering, straight-talking saloon bar humor, and bloodcurdling threats against the Muslim world.

There was the powerfully rotund and famously Israel-friendly Pastor John Hagee of "Cornerstone" megachurch in San Antonio who thrilled his audience one night back in October 2006 with a public address to Iran's president: "Listen up, Mr President of Iran. Don't threaten America! We're not afraid of you!" before provoking a storm of applause and whistling with, "If you remember, Pharaoh threatened Israel and he ended up fish-food in the Red Sea!" A few days earlier he had assured National Public Radio's Fresh Air program that "those who live by the Koran have a scriptural mandate to kill Christian and Jews", adding, "It teaches that very clearly." He got away with that, but his powerful endorsement of Senator John McCain's presidential candidacy in 2008 backfired badly on the senator; Hagee, it turned out, had let rip against Catholics as well as Muslims.

A year earlier I had visited a megachurch in St Paul, Minnesota, for an event known as a "prophecy conference". Its star speaker was Hal Lindsay, a hell-raising, gun-slinging tugboat captain on the Mississippi until he found God, attended theology college and then, in 1970, penned a bestseller called The Late Great Planet Earth. With the looks and demeanor of an aging pop star, Lindsay perched on the high stool with a microphone in one hand and his Bible in the other to tell an audience of about 4,000 what they could expect and should look out for in the light of Old Testament prophecies. He warned of terrifying disasters: Hurricane Katrina had been bad but "what will happen when someone decides to smuggle a nuclear warhead into one of our ports?".

Lindsay made his audience-cum-congregation laugh out loud by describing Islam as "violent to the core" and the Palestinians' miserably overpopulated and isolated Gaza Strip as a "target-rich environment" for the Israeli army. Next, he invited them to open their Bibles at Isaiah, chapter 17: "An oracle concerning Damascus. Behold, Damascus will cease to be a city, and will become a heap of ruins." "My opinion is that Damascus will be destroyed....," he continued, adding that Syria was "a troublemaker, a terrorist headquarters", musing, "I wish the US would obliterate Syria."

The following spring I joined a large group of Americans on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, led by one Chuck Missler, a retired aerospace engineer who ran an internet ministry, rather than his own church. In Chuck's view, Islam was a "Satanic religion" and he could discern the shape of a devil on one of the gray-veined marble panels on the exterior of the Muslims' Dome of the Rock. On the last morning of the tour, Missler and I fell out badly over breakfast; I had begun questioning his views so he began banging his Bible on the table, telling me that if I did not believe every word it said was true he had nothing more to say to me.

All three of these men had created lucrative religious business enterprises. Undeniably charismatic, funny, red-blooded and energetic people, they were all blessed with a boundless self-belief. Pastor Terry Jones admirably fits the same template; the difference is surely only in degree. In the wake of the horror of 9/11, the West's ill-conceived response to which so many now regard as another catastrophe, these men of God have deliberately compounded the problem. Spreading Western Christian fear, hatred and mistrust of the Muslim world, they talk their frighteningly facetious talk, but Pastor Terry Jones has gone out and tried to walk it too.

And there is nothing new about the template. Nineteenth-century American history is littered with tales of men like these who founded breakaway sects that defined themselves by some ludicrously literal reading of something in the Bible and then led their followers into absurd or dangerous adventures.

There were the 156 followers of a Pastor George J Adams, members of the Church of the Messiah in Maine, whom he persuaded to take ship with all their "houses, our agricultural implements, also our mechanical implements and our furniture" for the Holy Land in 1866. An alcoholic and a fantasist, Pastor Adams let everyone down. Within a year of their arrival in the Holy Land, the colony of "Regenerators" was riven with strife, many had died, and Adams himself was found lying in the middle of a road in Jaffa, "in the most degrading state of drunkenness".

John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Plymouth Brethren sect, was an Irish-born example of the same type. But on trips to the US and Canada in the 1860s and 70s, even he complained of the North American ecclesiastical scene resembling a garden "overrun with weeds, some plants set free". It pained him to encounter so much "looseness as to practice and doctrine". Darby's teachings, including an over-literal interpretation of one line of the Bible now popularly known as "The Rapture", has found a much wider audience in the United States than in Britain.

The cause of the abundance and proliferation of churches and sects in the US today has its roots in the fact that theirs is a society that was founded by members of European sects dubbed heretic by the established churches of their countries, by people forced to flee to practice their faith in freedom - starting with our own Puritans. Unfettered by any supervising umbrella institutions of established churches such those of Rome and Canterbury, American churches have been free to grow tough and worldly and as much defined by the personality and talents of their preachers as any Muslim mosque in the fight to survive against the ferocious competition. The American pastor has a valuable tax-exempt charity status to help him but the onus is on him to gather and galvanize a bigger congregation than his rivals; better sound systems and seating and crèches, more jokes, more excitement, more thrills and more fun are what it is often about.

My guess is that a bonfire of the Korans just sounded like a lot of fun.

Victoria Clark's books include '[Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism](#)', published by Yale.

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Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism

Review (Amazon Site)

"An insightful and readable book on Christian Zionism. . . . [Clark] adds freshness to the story through her travels and interviews with the principals. . . . Recommended." -Choice (Choice)

Guided by a literal reading of the prophetic sections of the Bible, Christian Zionists are convinced that the world is hurtling toward a final Battle of Armageddon. They believe that war in the Middle East is God's will for the region. In this timely book, Victoria Clark first explores the 400-year history of this powerful political ideology, laying to rest the idea that Christian Zionism is a passing craze or the province of a lunatic fringe. Then Clark surveys the contemporary Christian Zionist scene in Israel and in the United States, where the influence of the religious fundamentalists has never been greater.

Clark engages with Christian Zionism directly, interviewing leaders, attending events, and traveling with Christian Zionists in the Holy Land. She also investigates the Christian Zionist presence in Israel. She finds that the view through the Christian Zionist lens is dangerously simple: President Bush's War on Terror is a mythic battle between good and evil, and Syria and Iran represent the powers of darkness. Such views are far from rare—an estimated fifteen to twenty million Americans share them. Almost one in three Americans believes Israel was given to the Jews by God as a prelude to the Battle of Armageddon and Jesus' Second Coming. Clark concludes with an assessment of Christian Zionists' impact on American foreign policy in the Middle East and on America's relationships with European allies since the attacks of 9/11.

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[Gary Laderman: Dangerous Religion](#)

Dangerous Religion

Which religion has proved the most violent and destructive in US history?

The answer should not be a surprise.

By Gary Laderman [article link](#)

August 20, 2010 | Religion Dispatches

What is the most dangerous religion in America?

A slightly loaded question that no one in their right mind would attempt to answer, no? But it is a question at the heart of the [debates](#) surrounding mosques and Muslims in America today. The [opposition](#) against building an Islamic center near the site where the World Trade Center once stood, and the growing outcry around the country about the creation of other Muslim places to gather and worship, suggests that many Americans are not afraid to answer the question without hesitation.

In the post-9/11 world we now live in, Islam poses the greatest threat to American lives and security; a nefarious, fanatical religion that can bring death and destruction to innocent people, that disregards our laws and codes of conduct, and that is prone to acts of violence beyond the pale of civilized society. At least this is the message we are hearing more and more frequently in the news, especially in the wake of President Obama's [recent statements](#); views espoused by religious and political leaders as well as average American citizens fearful of Muslims abroad and at home.

Hatred of Infidels, the Subhuman, the Different

But perhaps it might be worthwhile to take a step back from all the heated rhetoric and passionate emotions fueling the fires of hatred and distrust in the current moment and take a brief look into the past. In the pre-9/11 world and backward through time to the founding of this great country, a historical perspective leads to a very different picture about religious violence and what religion poses the greatest threat to American lives. Anyone who takes the time to research and reflect on the nation's past might be led to believe that Christianity has been the most dangerous and violent religion in the United States:

that it is a religion inspiring bloodshed and discrimination, hatred and terrorist acts against people understood to be infidels, subhuman, or simply different.

“Christianity” of course is a meaningless label, as [I’ve written before](#). Like “Islam” it is too broad a category to cover the radically diverse practices, beliefs, and interpretive communities associated with it. So let me be even bolder and say that Protestants, and even more specifically, Anglo-European Protestant men, would appear to be the most dangerous religious individuals in American history. Without question white Protestant males from the colonial era to the dawn of the twenty-first century have inflicted more pain, more suffering, more terror than any other individuals in this so-called “city on a hill.”

This historical perspective is placed in sharp relief by a new book that coincidentally arrived in the mail as I was preparing to write this piece last week. [Religious Intolerance in America: A Documentary History](#), edited by John Corrigan and Lynn S. Neal, is chock full of fascinating documentation pointing to this interpretation, providing evidence that throughout US history the perpetrators of religiously-inspired violence have usually been white Protestant men fearful of non-Protestant communities. It’s an easy case to make with or without the book when commonly known events from historical eras are brought to mind:

- In colonial America, Protestant men [burned witches](#) at the stake, hanged Quakers on the gallows, destroyed indigenous surrounding cultures, and supported the heinous slave trade bringing Africans to North America.
- In the early national period and through the antebellum era, white Protestant males continued the wanton devastation of Native American tribes as the American territories expanded; inflicted horrible suffering on slaves by tearing families apart, raping innocent women, and killing blacks as if they were not human beings; murdered Joseph Smith and harassed early Mormon followers; and discriminated against Catholics in both subtle and overtly hostile acts of violence.
- In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, men associated with Protestant churches espoused awful anti-Semitic views that led to the [lynching of Leo Frank](#) and a host of discriminatory practices against Jews, harassed freed blacks and others by wearing white hoods and engaging in despicable, cowardly, and murderous acts, and enacted numerous policies that forced Native peoples to convert to Christianity.
- From the early decades of the twentieth century on through to the end of the twentieth century, white Protestants made sure that Japanese Americans were placed in internment camps on the West coast, joined a variety of Christian militia movements spread across rural America that promoted violence against the federal government, and participated in a range of hate crimes against blacks, gays, and others deemed to be enemies worthy of discrimination and brutality.

Is it Fair to Generalize?

Throughout American history white Protestant men enjoyed privilege and opportunities not available to others, and asserted that the destiny of the nation belonged to them under the providential power of their God. And they had no qualms about creating laws to oppress those less fortunate or taking the law into their own hands to lash out against the perceived threats to their version of a Christian nation. Racist views, economic injustices, and political machinations were rationalized by religiously-inspired, divinely-sanctioned hatred emanating from the home, the streets, and even, at times, from the churches they attended.

Did every single white Protestant male share exactly the same perspectives on blacks, Native Americans, Catholics, gays, and others? Were all white Protestant men guilty of heinous actions based on the cruelties and violence perpetrated by segments of the Protestant communities? Is it fair to generalize about an entire religion by singling out the acts of specific individuals associated with that religion?

Using the same logic as those who group all Muslims under one America-hating banner, the answer would appear to be yes. And if we follow this same ignorant logic, it would indeed make sense to begin protesting the building of Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist churches near hallowed sites that are supposed to symbolize the highest ideals and values of the American experiment: religious freedom, opportunity for all, equality before the law, sacrifice for a greater good, and so

on. Forget about diversity within white Protestantism—the [Social Gospel](#) and pacifists, or communitarian movements and Unitarianism—in this worldview.

But no one in their right mind would use the kind of simplistic, odious, ill-informed logic we hear so frequently in the news and originating from the blogosphere and mainstream media about Muslims. Muslim-Americans who worked and died in the World Trade Center, who are pillars of their local communities, who participate in significant interfaith efforts—all of these religious human beings are utterly and completely disregarded in the vile rhetoric spewing from those who oppose ensuring Muslims have the same rights as other Americans. Even white Protestant Americans who belong to the same religion as those in the past who have been killers, fanatics, and terrorists.

Gary Laderman is Director of Religion Dispatches and Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Religion at Emory University. Order his most recent book, *Sacred Matters* (The New Press, May 12, 2009), [here](#). His full bio can be found [here](#). Read his other articles [here](#).

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:15 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Saturday, September 11, 2010

[The Social Meaning of the Lord's Prayer](#)

The weekly Sabbath between Trumpets and Atonement is known as Sabbath Shubah ("return"), meaning "repentance Sabbath." Hosea 14:1-9 and Micah 7:19-20 are read on this Sabbath. Repentance is the vehicle God has assigned through which man may reach Him. The only way to approach God is through repentance. The value of repentance is also emphasized by the Biblical example of King Hezekiah, who, when upon his deathbed, pleaded with God for mercy. God granted Hezekiah's request and extended his life for fifteen years, II Kings 20:1-11. [quoted from an article by Richard C. Nickels, MMr [Day of Trumpets: The Return of Jesus Christ 2](#)]

Walter Rauschenbusch was a key figure in the 'social gospel' movement in N America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A Baptist minister who from working in the 'hell's kitchen' of New York saw that the gospel requires radical social and political transformation. **The kingdom of God is a model for a society based on the Christian principles of equal rights and democratic distribution of economic power.**

The Social Meaning of the Lord's Prayer

Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918)
Rochester, New York State

The Lord's Prayer is recognized as the purest expression of the mind of Jesus Christ. It crystallizes his thoughts. It conveys the atmosphere of his trust in the Father. It gives proof of the transparent clearness and peace of his soul.

It first took shape as a protest against the worldly flattery with which men tried to influence or persuade their gods. **He demanded simplicity and sincerity in all expressions of religion, and offered this as an example of the straightforwardness with which men might deal with their Father.** Hence the brevity and conciseness of it:

"In prayer use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them for your Father knoweth what things you have need of before you ask him.

After this manner pray ye:

Our Father who art in heaven
Hallowed by thy name
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors
And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."
Matthew 6:7-13 (American Revision)

The Lord's Prayer is so familiar to us that few have stopped to understand it. The general tragedy of misunderstanding which has followed Jesus Christ throughout the centuries has frustrated the purpose of his model prayer also. He gave it to stop vain repetitions, and it has been turned into a contrivance for incessant repetition. The churches have employed it for their ecclesiastical ritual. Yet it is not ecclesiastical. **There is no hint in it of the Church, the ministry, the doctrines of theology, or the sacraments.**

It has also been used for the devotions of the personal religious life. It is, indeed, profoundly personal. **But its *deepest significance* for the individual is revealed only when he dedicates his personality to the vaster purposes of the Kingdom of God, and approaches all his personal problems from that point of view.** Then he enters both into the real meaning of the Lord's Prayer, and into the spirit of the Lord himself.

The Lord's Prayer is part of the heritage of social Christianity which has been appropriated by men who have had little sympathy with its social spirit. It belongs to the equipment of the soldiers of the Kingdom of God. **It is the great charter of all social prayers.**

When he bade us say, "Our Father," Jesus spoke from that consciousness of human solidarity which was a matter of course in all his thinking. He compels us to clasp hands in spirit with all our brothers and thus to approach the Father together. **Before God no man stands alone.** Before the All-seeing he is surrounded by the spiritual throng of all to whom he stands related, near and far, all whom he loves or hates, whom he serves or oppresses, whom he wrongs or saves. **We are one with our fellow-men in all our needs. We are one in our sin and our salvation.** To recognize that *oneness* is the first step toward praying the Lord's Prayer aright. That recognition is also the foundation of social Christianity.

The three petitions with which the prayer begins express the great desire which was fundamental in the heart and mind of Jesus: **"Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."** Together they express his yearning faith in the possibility of a reign of God on earth in which his name shall be hallowed and his will be done. **They look forward to the ultimate perfection of the common life of humanity on this earth, and pray for the divine revolution which is to bring that about.**

There is no request here that we be saved from earthliness and go to heaven which has been the great object of churchly religion. **We pray here that heaven may be duplicated on earth through the moral and spiritual transformation of humanity, *both* in its personal units and its corporate life.** No form of religion has ever interpreted this prayer aright which did not have a loving understanding for the plain daily relations of men, and a living faith in their possible spiritual nobility.

And no man has outgrown the crude selfishness of religious immaturity who has not followed Jesus in setting this desire for **the social salvation of mankind** ahead of all personal desires. The desire for the Kingdom of God precedes and outranks everything else in religion, and forms the tacit presupposition of all our wishes for ourselves. In fact, no one has a clear right to ask for bread for his body or strength for his soul, unless he has identified his will with this all-embracing purpose of God, and intends to use the vitality of body and soul in the attainment of that end.

With that understanding we can say that the remaining petitions deal with personal needs. Among these the prayer for the daily bread takes first place. Jesus was never as "spiritual" as some of his later followers. He never forgot or belittled the elemental need of men for bread. The fundamental place which he gives to this petition is a recognition of the economic basis of life. But he lets us pray only for the bread that is needful, and for that only when it becomes needful. The conception of what is needful will expand as human life develops. **But this prayer can never be used to cover luxuries that debilitate, nor accumulations of property that can never be used but are sure to curse the soul of the holder with the diverse diseases of mammonism.**

In this petition, too, Jesus compels us to stand together. **We have to ask in common for our daily bread. We sit at the common table in God's great house, and the supply of each depends on the security of all.** The more society is socialized, the clearer does that fact become, and the more just and humane its organization becomes, the more will that recognition be at the bottom of all our institutions. **As we stand thus in common, looking up to God for our bread, every one of us ought to feel the sin and shame of it if he habitually takes more than his fair share and leaves others hungry that he may surfeit. It is inhuman, irreligious, and indecent.**

The remaining petitions deal with the spiritual needs. Looking backward, we see that our lives have been full of sin and failure, and we realize the need of forgiveness. Looking forward, we tremble at the temptations that await us and pray for deliverance from evil. In these prayers for the inner life, where the soul seems to confront God alone, we should expect to find only individualistic religion. But even here the social note sounds clearly.

This prayer will not permit us to ask for God's forgiveness without making us affirm that we have forgiven our brothers and are on a basis of brotherly love with all men: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." We shall have to be socially right if we want to be religiously right. **Jesus will not suffer us to be pious toward God and merciless toward men.**

In the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," we feel the human trembling of fear. Experience has taught us our frailty. Every man can see certain contingencies just a step ahead of him and knows that his moral capacity for resistance would collapse hopelessly if he were placed in these situations. Therefore Jesus gives voice to our inarticulate plea to God not to bring us into such situations.

But such situations are created largely by the social life about us. **If the society in which we move is rank with alcoholism and drug abuse, or full of the suggestiveness and solicitations of sexual permissiveness; if our business life is such that we have to lie and cheat and be cruel in order to live and prosper; if our political organization offers an ambitious man the alternative of betraying the public good or of being thwarted and crippled in all his efforts, then the temptations are created in which men go under, and society frustrates the prayer we utter to God. No church can interpret this petition intelligently which closes its mind to the debasing or invigorating influence of the spiritual environment furnished by society. No man can utter this petition without conscious or unconscious hypocrisy who is helping to create the temptations in which others are sure to fall.**

The words "Deliver us from the evil one" have in them the ring of battle. They bring to mind the incessant grapple of the choice between God and the influencing and malignant powers of evil in the minds and lives of humanity. To the men of the first century that meant Satan and his host of evil spirits who ruled in the oppressive, extortionate, and idolatrous powers of Rome. **Today the original spirit of that prayer will probably be best understood by those who are pitted against the terrible powers of organized covetousness and institutionalized oppression.**

Thus the Lord's Prayer is the great prayer of social Christianity, [of the Church of God]. It is charged with what we call "social consciousness." **It assumes the social solidarity of men as a matter of course.** It recognizes the social basis of all moral and religious life even in the most intimate personal relations to God. [It recognizes the communitarian gospel.]

It is not the property of those whose chief religious aim is to pass through an evil world in safety, leaving the world's evil unshaken. **Its dominating thought is the moral and religious transformation of mankind in *all* its social relations.** It was left to us by Jesus Christ, the great initiator of the Christian revolution; and it is the rightful property of those who follow his banner in the conquest of the world.

Originally posted March 16, 2010



Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:30 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Linh Dinh: Collapsing America

Collapsing America

By Linh Dinh [article link](#)

September 10, 2010 | OpEdNews

All governments lie, kill and misuse public funds, but these calculated habits are amplified manifold during wars. We're in two now, aiming for a third. Japan, whose land we're still occupying 65 years after Hiroshima, has just announced sanctions against Iran beyond what the U.N. mandated. South Korea swiftly followed suit. It's surprising to see these two countries so in sync, until one remembers that they have become American cheerleaders for decades. Rah, rah, bomb Tehran! A murderous chorus is rising, yet again. Countries that aren't our client states can be counted with two hands, even those missing fingers from an exploding grenade.

Universal outrage has been drummed up over the case of an Iranian woman about to be stoned to death for adultery. She's also implicated in the murder of her husband, for which she may be hanged. This second, more serious crime has been left out of many news stories. America also executes, but it doesn't stone, especially for a bit of ticklish fun on the side. We inject, electrocute, gas, hang and shoot our condemned. We're more humane that way. Forever bureaucratic, we pay attention to procedural niceties.

Our objection, then, is not to capital punishment, but to certain methods. Stoning is barbaric. We don't stone, period, except during one of our serial wars, where we will stone entire communities back to the Stone Age. But that's war, buddy. We also use phosphorous and cluster bombs, plant landmines that will last generations. To rectify and avenge the stoning of one woman, someone we don't really care about, whose name we can't even pronounce, we'll flatten Iran, maybe by Thanksgiving.

The United States is concerned about women worldwide. It is touched and outraged by one Afghan woman, Aisha, whose nose was sliced off by her Taliban husband. To defend her honor, it has killed hundreds of thousands of her brothers and sisters. To protect her, it has destroyed her country. It's the principle that matters. We care about the individual, at least those who are useful to our agendas. It's the masses we don't give a flying whoopee about. How can we not raise our voices, for example, when an imprisoned prostitute--hardly a criminal, really, even less so than adulterer--is left in a cage, to be baked to death for at least four hours in 107-degree heat? Her captors ignored her pleas for water. They wouldn't even allow her to use the bathroom, so she soiled herself before passing out. She was still alive, however, when finally taken to the hospital, where doctors allowed her to die. Incredibly, no charges have been filed. Such barbarity and judicial callousness deserve our fullest condemnations, except that hardly anyone has heard of [Marcia Powell, 48](#), who died in an Arizona prison in May of 2009. The mainstream media ignore her, because her abject death cannot be exploited for political purposes. We're not trying to bomb Arizona.

Needing to kill, a government will lie before, during and after splattering blood. Eschewing subtlety, it prefers to speak in slogans and clipped, cartoonish sentences. They hate us for who we are. We must fight them over there, so we don't have to fight them over here. We're trying to root out the bad guys. Adopting this lingo, many Americans are dubbing the community center and mosque near Ground Zero a "jihad mosque" or a "victory mosque." In Lower Manhattan last week, I saw a man carrying a sign, "EVERYTHING I EVER NEEDED TO KNOW ABOUT ISLAM I LEARNED ON 9/11." Another displayed a caricature of "IMAM OBAMA." There was an effigy of a tied up Palestinian, complete with keffiyeh, with this placard, "OBAMA: With a name like HUSSAIN we understand. Bloomberg: what the f@&k is your excuse?"

Totalitarianism always breeds idiocy. Lies that go unchallenged lead to more preposterous lies. Idiocy is also the manure from which totalitarianism rises. On September 11, 2001, the entire world saw America symbolically imploded, but our actual collapse is ongoing. It is relatively gradual, unlike the three, yes, three, World Trade Center buildings that tumbled

onto their own foot prints. For the last nine years, we have endured an unending stream of lies and idiocy, none more grotesque than the official explanation to what happened that tragic day.

Despite being lied to repeatedly, almost daily, Americans are strangely gullible to incoherent, even ridiculous narratives dished up by their government. Brainwashed by the bromide that their nation is always a force for good, anywhere, worldwide, Americans can't imagine that Washington could be complicit in the murder of its own citizens. Ignored is the fact that it has done so many times before, and since, 9/11. Using false pretexts to invade Iraq, our government has caused the death of over four thousand Americans, more than the number who perished on 9/11.

I don't know what happened that day, but it makes no sense to me that World Trade Center #7 fell down without being hit by anything. It makes no sense to me that it collapsed exactly the same way as the twin towers, as if imploding. It makes no sense that the passport of Satam al Suqami, one of the alleged hijackers, could be found on the ground, when entire skyscrapers were being pulverized. I also don't understand how no military jets could intercept any of the three planes that hit their targets that day. The first tower was struck at 8:46AM, the Pentagon at 9:40AM, nearly an hour later, with no effective response from our vaunted military. I used to take buses to and from the Pentagon Transit Center. I knew the building wasn't very tall, so it struck me as weird how an airliner could hit it from the side. Why fly parallel to the ground, nearly shaving it, to strike such a low target? Why not just dive into it? There are red flags all over this incident, yet many sane, reasonable people will become completely unhinged at the slightest suggestion that the official version doesn't add up. Our government lies all the time, but when it comes to this one incident, we shouldn't question anything? Even National Review, of all places, pointed out visa irregularities among the alleged hijackers, how they could enter the U.S. without the proper paperwork.

After Martin Luther King was killed in 1968, his family refused to believe the official explanation. They fought and fought until an assassination conspiracy trial was scheduled in 1999. Presented with extensive evidences, a jury concluded that, yes, the federal, state and local governments all had a hand in Dr. King's murder, and that James Earl Ray was not the shooter. The King family did what any sane, loving family would do. Coretta Scott King explained, "We had to get involved because the system did not work. Those who are responsible for the assassination were not held to account for their involvement [""] It has been a difficult and painful experience to revisit this tragedy, but we felt we had an obligation to do everything in our power to seek the truth."

On September 11, 2001, someone stabbed America. She's being murdered right now. As Americans, we need to get to the heart of this, because this madness and deceit are perpetuating themselves. If we don't have the courage and clarity to confront this evil, we won't regain our sanity or move forward. We might as well be dead. We're dying. As with the King murder and so much else, you cannot expect the system to convict itself. It will lie and lie until the truth hardly matters.

Linh Dinh is tracking our deteriorating social scape through his frequently updated photo blog, [State of the Union](#). He is the author of two books of stories, five of poems, and a just released novel, [Love Like Hate](#).

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9/11 - A FOURTH TURNING PERSPECTIVE

By Jim Quinn [article link](#)

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By Kevin Gosztola [article link](#)

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Symbol Of 9/11 Is The Falling Man / Not Falling Towers

By Allen L Roland [article link](#)

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9/11 ANALYSIS: From Ronald Reagan and the Soviet-Afghan War to George W Bush and September 11, 2001

by Michel Chossudovsky [article link](#)

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9/11 ANALYSIS: 9/11 and America's Secret Terror Campaign

The Imperial Anatomy of Al-Qaeda, Part III

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September Eleven: Hope or Hate?

"Book burning is a special kind of savagery..."

by Felicity Arbuthnot [article link](#)

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Let's Make September 11 a Day of Peace

The ninth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States should serve as a moment to reflect on tolerance.

By Amy Goodman [article link](#)

September 10, 2010 | Democracy Now! | AlterNet

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The Self-Inflicted Wounds of 9/11

by: Melvin A. Goodman [article link](#)

September 11, 2010 | t r u t h o u t

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The Anniversary of 9/11

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:05 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Johnny Silver Bear: One if by land...

One if by land...

by Johnny Silver Bear [article link](#)

(Editors Note: One of the perks of editing "the Bear" allows me to post my own rants. I originally published One if by Land in November, 2004.)

As the editor of the [Silver Bear Cafe](#), I try to focus on the ramifications of world events. I try to understand how what's going on now will affect your pocketbook next week, next month, next year. It is my sole intent to help you consider the possibilities which will, in turn, help you prepare for your financial future.

I have received quite a few emails in response to my recent article, "[Light a Candle](#)" (article posted below -MMr). In that article I suggested that, as a result of a pandemic national apathy, "the Game" was overwhelmingly in the control of "the Dark Side". I posed a question near the end;

"What purpose would a revolution serve. Who among us has a solution?"

That line was meant to challenge the sensibilities of the readers and perhaps invoke some attention to the situation and bring some of the problems to light. Problems are like vampires. They don't like the light.

A good portion of the emails I received conveyed a frustration borne from my appraisal of the current state of the world, and my seeming lack of a solution.

I try and stay focused on financial and economic issues. As a rule I try not to delve into political issues because:

1. I believe that by dividing the voters through the current two party system, "the Dark Side" has successfully herded the great majority of American voters to a place where they expend their energies in fighting over questions of no importance. The candidates are both "Demopublicans", intent on furthering the agenda of their "puppet masters".
2. Unless a great number of Americans wake up to the realities of the situation and assume the responsibility of "spreading the word", no significant political changes will occur.

There may be a solution to the potentially devastating onslaught of the evil forces of "the Dark Side", but it will involve an uncharacteristic response from "We the People", the vast majority of which will vote for a Demopublican. Everyone who emailed me seemed to understand the folly of voting for a Demopublican. So what else is new?

I, of course, believe that a solution exists, but it will require the here-to-fore missing superhuman effort of all you "enlightened" folks out there who agree with my prognosis, but have yet to do anything about it. It will require a unified application of energies, the likes of which have not been mustered since the revolution.

To quote a paragraph from a recent Bill Bonner editorial;

"In the investment markets, a man gets what he deserves. But in politics, he gets what his idiot neighbor deserves. And one thing you can count on is that the guy next door will vote for a man who at least appears to be as dull and stupid as he is. The reason for that is very simple. The mediocre, lumpenvoter believes his opinions are better than those of anyone else. He looks for his own stupid face reflected in the views of his political leaders. Someone who has actually thought deeply about issues is not only alien to him, but offensive. The complexities and ironies of the situation bewilder and annoy him. So, he turns for comfort and assurance to the simple-minded candidate with the simple-minded opinions."

Editors note: For more of Mr. Bonner's insights please visit the [Daily Reckoning.com](http://DailyReckoning.com).

Unfortunately, there is nothing simple-minded about the current state of affairs. We have been intentionally led to believe that our vote constitutes the preservation of our freedoms, and that democracy is the foundation of our freedom and should be the foundation of freedom throughout the world.

"Government is the great fiction, through which everybody endeavors to live at the expense of everybody else." - Frederick Bastiat

The concept of democracy is comforting to most of us. It seems to instill a feeling of security and freedom. Consequently, if the majority ruled, we would all be forced to live like the majority. Simple-mindedly. The majority believes in "something for nothing". There is no such thing.

Fortunately, the Founders did not think like the majority. If the majority had ruled, we would have never had a revolution. The Founders were part of the minority and did not establish our government as a democracy. In fact, the only references to democracy in the founding documents of our nation were purveyed in a very negative light.

Liberty is the concept on which our country was founded. Liberty is the only thing that insures our freedom. The Constitution and its first ten Amendments, (the Bill of Rights), provided for our liberties and therefore our freedom. Attempts by "the Dark Side" to subjugate the Constitution, (i.e., the Federal Reserve Act, the Patriot Acts I and II, and any other legislation that tends to abort Constitutional mandates), have been veiled attempts to strip our liberties and therefore

our freedom. Consider that in the past, we had Liberty coins, not Democracy coins. We have the Statue of Liberty, not the Statue of Democracy. We pledge allegiance to the flag, and to the Republic for which it stands, not the democracy for which it stands. Patrick Henry said: "Give me Liberty or give me death!", not "Give me democracy or give me death".

The ideology of Liberty suggests and implies that people should choose to be benevolent and productive, as part of God's moral code. That society will create for itself non-governmental organizations to deal with social needs, that government is established by society to sustain and defend the unalienable (God given) rights of the individual, **and limited only to this function**. Political power was to remain within the individual and his society.

So you may ask, if we live in a Republic founded upon the principles of Liberty and limited government, why do so many of our politicians and teachers keep trying to shove this concept of democracy down our throats, as if freedom naturally followed? That is a very good question! Perhaps puppet politicians and their masters don't like the limits on the powers that have been granted them by our state and federal constitutions. Maybe it's because majority rule sounds legitimate and moral on its face. The majority of "We the People" have apparently gone for their hooey. If we don't watch out, we may end up where we are heading. Only the knowledge of our heritage will enable us to anticipate such schemes and act accordingly to right the direction of our Republic. If we are to successfully alter the course of America, we must familiarize ourselves with our Constitutional tenets, and share them with everyone we meet. We must "*Defend to the Death*" the Constitution of the United States of America. Otherwise, we will be forced to take whatever "the Dark Side" decides to dole out.

Making money use to be the highest and most meaningful contribution a free man in a free market could make to the economic vibrancy of our society. The Constitution originally contained the words: "*Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Property*". Through the application of each individual's energies, in the "Pursuit of Property", the standard of life in our country was progressively raised for everyone.

Unfortunately, through an insidious misinformation campaign, we have been duped by those whose wealth and position have allowed them to be tempted by, and then to succumb to, the lure of avarice and greed. They have decided that anything less than everything is not enough. "The Dark Side" has thwarted the essence of capitalism by engineering the demise of the Gold Standard. Through their incipient use of "political puppets" they have, over the course of the last two hundred years, finally succeeded in channeling the wealth, which comes as a result of human toil, into their coffers. The producers and savers of our country, it's life blood, are being methodically fleeced. Soon, the last meaningful productive job in America will be exported to China. On that day American society will become a zoo, and we, as citizens, will be reduced to the station of animals in a cage, totally dependent on the zoo-keepers for our food and shelter.

Central banking is the vehicle through which the most heinous rip off ever conceived in the history of the world has been perpetrated. The U.S. Federal Reserve is the most successful of all central banks in history. Since 1971 it's unfettered issuance of money has continued to debase our currency and as a result adulterated our living standard at an ever increasing rate.

"The Dark Side" has successfully placed their agents in positions as politicians ranging from school board members to U. S. presidents, newspaper publishers, columnists, church ministers, university presidents, professors, textbook writers, labor union leaders, filmmakers, radio and television commentators and many others.

These agents control the information available to our people. They manipulate public opinion, elect whomever they want locally and nationally, and never expose the crooked money system. They promote school bonds, expensive and detrimental farm programs, "urban renewal," foreign aid, and many other schemes which place the people more deeply in debt to the bankers. Thoughtful citizens wonder why billions are spent on one program and billions on another which may duplicate it or even nullify it, such as paying some farmers not to raise crops, while at the same time building dams or canals to irrigate more farm land. Crazy or stupid?

Neither. The goal is more debt. Thousands of government-sponsored methods of wasting money go on continually. Most make no sense, but they are never exposed for what they really are: siphons sucking our Nation's economic lifeblood.

Is it still possible that as Americans we will find our virtue, reinvent our Republic, and restart our essential activity of "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Property"? Yes, but first the issuance of money must be returned to "We the People" and taken out of the hands of "the Dark Side". We must open the Mint to gold, as ordained by the Constitution. Only then will we be able to insure the preservation of our Liberties and our Freedom. It is, IMO, the only solution.

Very soon, as early as next year, a lot of people here will be glad they held gold and silver.

Get some control over some fresh water immediately.

Its not what you don't know that will screw you up, it's what you know that is wrong. The spin you hear from the mainstream media is intended to mislead you. Open your eyes and face the future. If you leave your head in the sand and ignore it, you are only leaving your butt exposed for the world to kick. This all may sound like gloom and doom, but when you get a handle on what is going to happen, you will have a future filled with opportunity. Fortune favors the Informed.

Kenneth Parsons, aka Johnny Silver Bear, is an IT professional in Texas and the President of Silver Bear Communications, Inc. Mr. Parsons has been involved in the advertising and promotion industry for over twenty-five years. He is the editor of the [Silver Bear Cafe](#) and, as such, is responsible for shaping the content of "The Bear". Mr. Parsons has served as CEO for Fiberscape Communications, Inc., a web site development / hosting and streaming multi-media company in Richardson, Texas since 1997. He is a Jeffersonian and a passionate supporter of the U.S. Constitution. He is also an outspoken advocate of gold money and equal tax rates. You can contact Mr. Parsons with questions or comments via email at johnny@silverbearcafe.com

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:58 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Johnny Silver Bear: Better to Light a Candle than to Curse the Darkness

Better to Light a Candle than to Curse the Darkness

by Johnny Silver Bear [article link](#)

(Editors Note: One of the perks of editing "the Bear" allows me to post my own rants. I originally published Better to Light a Candle than to Curse the Darkness in August, 2003. When I consider the effect that energy requirements have on humanity, the fact that global energy resources are mostly under the control of the "Dark Side", and, therefore, not under my control, or yours. I get a little worried. - JSB)

For the last seven years, I have spent almost all of my time trying to get a handle on the "big picture". The "little pictures" are made up of effects, and sometimes causes, but rarely motives. Its funny how all the "little pictures" don't always coalesce into a greater understanding until, all at once, the truth becomes blatantly obvious and undeniable.

In my attempt to determine "motives" I needed to ascertain the true meaning of "real wealth". I have come to the conclusion that besides hard assets, (real estate, factories, machinery, equipment, infrastructure, base metals, precious metals, natural resources, etc.), the only other source of "Real Wealth" comes as a result of human toil.

"Soft assets" are paper, and are the products of contrivances. These instruments have no intrinsic value and are therefore inferior to "hard assets". Whoever has the power to print the money ultimately has control over the value of all "soft assets".

My research has led me to three major issues. First, the nature of America's money supply. Second, the importance and availability of hydrocarbon resources. And thirdly, the importance and availability of fresh water.

How these three issues interrelate exposes the motives and the true nature of "the Game".

"The Game"

Let's say we have two "teams". The first team, (we'll call this team "the Dark Side"), is very well funded, managed, and extremely well trained. The coaching staff is privy to the best analysis and intelligence, has adopted a time tested strategy and is relentless in its desire to win. The second team, (we'll call this one "the Force"), does not even realize its a team. I'm talking, of course, of the "the Dark Side" as made up of the Elitists, (i.e., New World Order, Collectivists, Globalists, Banking Cartel, Fabians, the Illuminati, etc.). Everybody else is on "the Force". If you are not positive you are a member of the former, then you are undoubtedly playing for the latter.

The presence of two teams would suggest a game is in progress. The game started many years ago, and this one's for all "the marbles". I believe that the game plan provides that "the Force" will work itself to death.

"The Marbles"

All new money is loaned into circulation as an interest bearing debt. Since this system only creates the principal and never the interest, the debt is always greater than the money supply.

This fraudulently created debt forces American citizens to borrow constantly so the system can function. Eventually, the process becomes unworkable as society, mortgaged to the hilt, can no longer afford to borrow. This debt creates extreme stress for us as we struggle to meet impossible money obligations. The results are: a constantly rising cost-of-living, layoffs, bankruptcies, family breakdown, increased drug and alcohol use, an increase in crime and a general moral breakdown.

This system is part of the "Grand Strategy" that has allowed "the Dark Side" to gain a choke hold on the very survival of "the Force".

How did we let "the Dark Side" put themselves in a position of control over everything that lends to human survival? The indebtedness of "the Force" has insured a placated opponent.

What do I mean by everything? It seems that all the marbles fall into three categories. Hard Assets, Energy and Water. In order to gain control over all the marbles, part one of the "Grand Strategy" had to be implemented.

After the initial forming of "the Dark Side", the coaching staff had to insure the winning of the coin toss. They did this by the enactment of the Federal Reserve Act of 1913.

"We will receive"

"History reveals nations can be conquered by the use of one or more of three methods.

"The most common is conquest by war. In time, though, this method usually fails, because the captives hate the captors and rise up and drive them out if they can. Much force is needed to maintain control, making it expensive for the conquering nation."

"A second method is by religion, where men are convinced they must give their captors part of their earnings as "obedience to God." Such a captivity is vulnerable to philosophical exposure or by overthrow by armed force, since religion by its nature lacks military force to regain control, once its captives become disillusioned."

"The third method can be called economic conquest. It takes place when nations are placed under "tribute" without the use of visible force or coercion, so that the victims do not realize they have been conquered. "Tribute" is collected from them in the form of "legal" debts and taxes, and they believe they are paying it for their own good, for the good of others, or to protect all from some enemy. Their captors become their "benefactors" and "protectors".

"Although this is the slowest to impose. It is often quite long lasting, as the captives do not see any military force arrayed against them, their religion is left more or less intact, they have freedom to speak and travel, and they participate in "elections" for their rulers. Without realizing it, they are conquered, and the instruments of their own society are used to transfer their wealth to their captors and make the conquest complete."

"Today, as we stand before the dawn of a New World Order run by internationalist financiers, most of the revenue collected by the Federal government in the form of individual income taxes will go straight to paying the interest on the debt alone. At the rate the debt is increasing, eventually we'll reach a point where, even if the government takes every penny of its citizens' income via taxation, it will still not collect enough to keep up with the interest payments. The government will own nothing, the people will own nothing, and the banks will own everything. The New World Order will foreclose on America." - Taken from Sheldon Emery's "[Billions for the Bankers, Debts for the People](#)".

Because "the Dark Side" can create money out of thin air, they obviously do not consider it valuable. What is valuable to them is the human toil required to service the debt.

An example of the fraudulent nature of the "Grand Strategy" is the U.S. Government's bailout of Brazil a couple of years ago. The U. S. Government loaned the Brazilian Government \$30 billion, with the condition that loan and the interest on the loan be paid by the people of Brazil via taxation. The U.S. Government borrowed the money to loan to Brazil from the Federal Reserve for which the loan and the interest are guaranteed by the American people. Neither of the two aforementioned loans, for the exact same \$30 billion, will ever be paid, but the double debt service will go on forever. Two country's citizenry are being forced to pay interest on the same funny money!

This is equally true for all of our foreign aid to other countries, bailouts of criminally operated corporations, and all of the \$billions spent in pursuit of imperial hegemony.

This is not, however, a localized game. The stakes are huge and it is being played out all over the world. "the Dark Side" is financing the sale of "guns to the Arabs and dynamite to the Jews", as they have been on both sides of every war for hundreds of years.

The Second Quarter; Field Position

The probability that oil production on our planet has already peaked carries with it a death sentence for millions, maybe even billions of people within a single generation from now.

When we explore the economic effects of ever rising oil costs on transportation, electricity, economic growth and contraction, political power, civilization and – perhaps most importantly – food production. The picture is horrific, the ramifications being the end of the industrial age.

The "Dark Side" already controls the remaining hydrocarbon deposits of the earth.

In 1859, upon the introduction of petrol extraction technology, the world started running out of oil. There is only so much of it, and we have now reached a point where more than half of it has been used up.

What most people do not realize is that 60% of all hydrocarbon resources have been applied to food production. Through the use of petrochemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, diesel fuel for tractors and harvesters, gasoline for farm-to-market transport, gas generated electricity for refrigeration, plastics for packaging and storage, the lion's share of this resource has been used for food production.

Here's the rub. Through the application of the world's petro-resources in this manner, "the Dark Side" has enriched itself by artificially creating a market to sell to.

Oil based agriculture is primarily responsible for the world's population exploding from 1 billion at the middle of the 19th century to 6.3 billion at the turn of the 21st. As oil production went up, so did food production. As food production went up, so did the population. As the population went up, the demand for food went up, which increased the demand for oil. The price of food will now skyrocket because of the cost of fertilizer will soar. The cost of storing (electricity) and transporting (gasoline) the food that is produced will also soar.

In order for the planet to continue to support humanity, it's numbers will have to be reduced dramatically. Because of the misinformation campaign that was launched in the first quarter of the game, "the Force" is way out of position. As I stated earlier, most don't even know there's a game going on, much less that they're playing.

I foresee many lives being snuffed out within the next two decades as a result of the inability to afford food, (starvation), or through the involvement in the dozens of disputes that will arise over allocation of the world's remaining hydrocarbon resources, (war). Remember, "the Dark Side" is on both sides of all wars. Population contraction is absolutely essential to the planet's ability to support human life.

The Third Quarter; a Battle of Attrition

In 1998, the World Bank refused to guarantee a \$25 million loan to refinance water services in Cochabamba, Bolivia, unless the government sold the public water system to the private sector and passed the costs on to consumers. Bolivia, one of the poorest countries in the world, finally acquiesced. Only one bid was considered, and the company was turned over to Aguas del Tunari, a subsidiary of a conglomerate led by Bechtel, the giant San Francisco engineering and construction company.

In December 1999, before making any infrastructure investments, the private water company, Aguas del Tunari, announced the doubling of water prices. For most Bolivians, this meant that water would now cost more than food; for those on minimum wage or unemployed, water bills suddenly accounted for close to half their monthly budgets, and for many, water was shut off completely.

To add to the problem, the Bolivian government, prompted by the World Bank, granted absolute monopolies to private water concessionaires, announced its support for full-cost water pricing, pegged the cost of water to the American dollar and declared that none of the World Bank loan could be used to subsidize water services for the poor. All water, even from community wells, required permits to access, and even peasants and small farmers had to buy permits to gather rainwater on their property.

The selling-off of public enterprises such as transportation, electrical utilities and education to foreign corporations has been a heated economic debate in Bolivia. But this was different; polls showed that 90 percent of the public wanted Bechtel out. Debate turned to protest and one of the world's first "water wars" was launched.

The people of Bolivia revolted against the government over the privatization of water. A broad-based movement of workers, peasants, farmers and others created the Coalition in Defense of Water and Life to "de-privatize" the local water system. Between January and early February, 2000, hundreds of thousands of Bolivians marched to Cochabamba in a showdown with the government, and a general strike and transportation stoppage brought the city to a standstill. Police reacted with violence and arrests and the army killed six people and injured more than 100 when it opened fire on demonstrators. In early April 2000, the government declared martial law.

Could this happen here? Is it possible that you could someday be charged for collecting rainwater off your roof? You would be surprised at how many trans-national companies already have stakes in water delivery in this country.

Globally, we have already entered water scarcity. The Middle East will run out of fresh water within the next ten years. Sub-Saharan Africa will run out in the next 5 years. China is considering moving the capital to another location because there is no more water in Beijing.

Closer to home, the mighty Colorado river no longer makes it to the Sea of Cortez. It trickles out somewhere in the Mexican desert south of the Arizona border. The Rio Grand, which use to flow into the Gulf of Mexico now stops some 20 miles short of Brownsville, Texas. Aquifers all over the country are being depleted far more rapidly than they can recharge themselves. We are on the verge of a national water crisis right here in America.

In the next two decades, the struggle for water will tear apart communities, exacerbate differences between social classes, and challenge governments and private organizations to change how they perceive their roles.

The Forth Quarter; an End Run

According to the World Trade Organization, "human needs can be supplied by private entrepreneurs for a profit, unlike a human right which accrues equally to everyone." National and international trade associations like the WTO and NAFTA define water as a "commodity" and have agreements requiring governments to permit water exports under specified conditions.

Commodification and privatization go hand in hand. Even though the evidence for water scarcity is overwhelming, governments and global bureaucracies, influenced by lobbyists, and, in many documented cases, outright bribery, are disposed to call water a commodity, to transfer what remains to private corporations, and to let the market determine who gets water and the price they pay for it.

The commodification of water, internationally, is on the horizon. The day will come when no one will be able to collect it without a permit. Many persons throughout the world will be prosecuted for its illegal possession.

It will happen here.

End Game

I guess it all boils down to human nature. There are and always will be the haves and the have nots. In their insatiable quest for profits, "the Dark Side", using their agents in trans-national corporations, the World Trade Organization and the World Bank, have successfully brought us to the brink of the abyss. Knowing full well the gravity of the situation and the only solution, they are now poised to solve the problem. There are far too many people on the planet. The time has come for contraction.

The world is no longer capable of economic expansion. We are entering a period of civilization where the keyword is sustainability, not growth.

Sustainability is job one. In order to incite the massive contraction that is desperately needed, economics will be used as a weapon. It is the weapon of choice when it comes to survival. The possession of Hard Assets, Energy and Fresh Water will rule the day.

What purpose would a revolution serve. Who among us has a solution?

In a world of \$100/barrel oil, the weak die and the strong survive. In a world of \$100/barrel water, there will not be 6.5 billion people on the earth. Actually I expect the number to be more in the 500 million range.

Very soon, as early as next year, a lot of people here will be glad they held gold and silver.

Get some control over some fresh water immediately.

Its not what you don't know that will screw you up, it's what you know that is wrong. The spin you hear from the mainstream media is intended to mislead you. Open your eyes and face the future. If you leave your head in the sand and ignore it, you are only leaving your butt exposed for the world to kick. This all may sound like gloom and doom, but when you get a handle on what is going to happen, you will have a future filled with opportunity. Fortune favors the Informed.

For my follow up essay on "the Big Picture" please see "[One if by Land...](#)" (article posted above -MMr)

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Friday, September 10, 2010

[Sarah van Gelder: Eight Ways to Confront Extremism on 9/11](#)

The flare-up surrounding the planned Quran burning and the proposed New York mosque make this 9/11 anniversary an especially important time to speak up.

Eight Ways to Confront Extremism on 9/11

by Sarah van Gelder [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 10, 2010 | YES! Magazine | CommonDreams

Who benefits when a pastor in a small town in Florida threatens to burn the Quran? Or when a proposal to build a Muslim cultural center in Manhattan erupts into a national controversy?

And what can those of us who believe extremism is harmful do to stop it?

Terry Jones, the Gainesville pastor who was catapulted onto the global stage by his plan to burn the Quran, said his action was about standing up to Islamic extremists. But General David Petraeus and others tell us that this action would play into the hands of extremists. Extremists need anger and hate to recruit and motivate followers; without images of outrage like this, people might revert to peace, respect, and tolerance, which, after all, come pretty naturally to a social species like ours.

There's another group of extremists who likewise rely on hatemongering. The extreme right wing in this country needs fear and anger to keep people distracted from the real sources of insecurity—a stalled economy that has been managed for the benefit of Wall Street and big corporations, two protracted and disastrous wars, and a system increasingly unable to support a middle-class way of life.

The extremists on both sides have an oddly symbiotic relationship—each thrives on the anger and vitriol of the other.

But Reverend Jones and others of his ilk can succeed only when moderate voices are silent. Quiet disapproval isn't enough. We must take a stand often, courageously, and respectfully for tolerance and peace. Here are a few ways we can do this during an especially fraught anniversary of the 9/11 attacks:

* **Speak out in support of religious freedom**, as the 9/11 [Families for Peaceful Tomorrow](#) did recently in support of the proposed New York City Muslim cultural center.

* **Speak up** when you hear Muslims or other groups disparaged, whether in public or private, as ColorLines publisher Rinku Sen suggests in her [recent column](#).

* **Read out loud from the Quran** or other Muslim texts on September 11, as the Network of Spiritual Progressives is doing (Brother Jamal Rahman, the Muslim Sufi member of our Interfaith Amigos, offers some verses from the Quran and from Rumi [here](#)). [Or](#) hold an interfaith candlelight vigil for peace, like the one planned by the [Gainesville Muslim Initiative](#).

* **Offer generous humanitarian aid to Pakistani flood victims** because they need help and because it's important for humanitarian aid to flow across religious divides.

* **Examine your own prejudices**—most of us have them. And consider what you have to gain and lose when [others are treated as equals](#).

* **Familiarize yourself** both with the violent interpretations of the religions you encounter and with the interpretations of the same [religious texts that emphasize love, compassion, and tolerance for all](#).

* **Speak out for tolerance** on blogs, Facebook page, in public forums, in your faith group, and in letters to the editor. Call out candidates for public office of any political party who use intolerance or people's race, religion, or immigration status to whip up electoral passions. Just a few voices for tolerance in any community can change the tone of a dialogue.

* **Monitor news and public-affairs media**, and insist that they include voices for peace and tolerance in their programming, and not give undue importance to advocates of exclusion and intolerance. (A starting place is to sign [Color of Change's petition](#) calling on businesses to "Turn Off Fox.")

In coming months and years, we can expect even greater social stresses from a flagging economy, the continuing wars, and the "natural" disasters that will occur with increasing frequency on an overheated planet. Those stresses will be multiplied if we allow demagogues to transform them into hate and anger. Silence won't be enough—we'll have to speak out if we are to stop the madness.

Question: What are you doing to counter intolerance? What have you found works best? [Please leave your comments below](#) (source article -MMr).

Sarah van Gelder is the Executive Editor of YES! Magazine.

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The Pastor and Cheap, Selective Concern for "Blood-Spilling"

by Glenn Greenwald [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 10, 2010 | Salon | CommonDreams

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When Sensationalism Rules the News

by Jerry Lanson [article link](#)

September 10, 2010 | CommonDreams

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:40 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

The Days of Awe, Days of Return to God

"Beginning on the Day of Trumpets and ending on the Day of Atonement ... [are] the "Ten Days of Penitence," or "Days of Awe," dedicated to the inner cleansing of the man. They are also known as "Days of Return," because we are to examine ourselves and return to God." [quote from article by Richard C. Nickels, MMr [Day of Trumpets: The Return of Jesus Christ 2](#)]

MM Book 2 Chapter 6-14

The 10 Commandments [10C] are a mental environment, each an attitude of mind [an expression of God's very own mind, His character]; "thou shalt not" implies the opposite "thou shalt *do*" [ie., in God's community there is no need, or desire for stealing, all shall freely share], our involvement and responsibility, our family consciousness [of God and man, our relationship], our personality; Philippians 2:5, "let this *mind be in you* that was also in Christ Jesus" – the 10C represent *together* the ultimate, genuine *survival* mentation matrix and paradigm [intelligent design, application (obedience); psychologically, the deep things of God; the ** COMMANDMENTS OF LIFE **]; 2 Cor 10:5, "... bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ" – the 10C are active, real, *living* laws, physically and spiritually [with real penalties when broken; witness the world], they *are* the God Family, they are the Family's ** Law of Agape Love **, yet the 10C and God are not real to most people !! – it is the transgression of these laws [1 John 3:4, sin is the transgression of the law] that has separated God and man, that has made the reality of our evil systemic [and the resultant suffering engendered] paramount in our lives – these laws are the only way to a *sustainable existence* for man on this planet; they are God's systemic, His guiding principles, they are what we were designed for !! — the reality of this world must be God's reality, we must make God our own, a systemic based on "give" NOT a systemic based on "take", a true systemic of resultant blessings NOT a false, evil systemic of curses [an absence of the blessings !!] – these "living laws" engender [to beget; to bring into being; cause; produce; originate] a *true life*, a living, symbiotic environment; they are part-and-parcel of God's Holy Spirit, and as such THEY IMPART GOD'S LIFE AND WITHOUT THEM WE WILL CEASE TO EXIST !!

MM Book 2 Chapter 6-15

We know and love God, by, in and through His living and eternal law !! – God's SHEPHERDING LAW is now *critical* to the very survival of humanity — the concept of grace without law is A LIE and has resulted in the bondage of mankind [Romans 7:7 What shall we say then? [Is] the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. 1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not *in* us] – the Law of God is NOT done away with; it provides the knowledge of sin and its existence, the knowledge that is so vital, so critical to our very survival !! – it is God's *law of liberty* that gives us freedom, that allows community; it is eternal life, God's *gift* to us !! — grace without law negates itself [grace is the freedom given to us by God to do the *works of God*; grace under law enables the shepherding "ministry of gifts"], it results in a false grace in bondage [slavery] to Satan and his systemic; it abrogate's the environment of God's grace, the way, the path out of sin, it abrogate's the knowledge of God, the very preaching and witness [so speak ye, and so do] !! – WITHOUT THE LAW OF GOD WE CANNOT KNOW AND LOVE GOD, OR BE KNOWN OF GOD !! – the penalty of sin is death [cessation of existence], and faith without works [our Family Names, our responsibilities, and our purpose (to destroy the works of the devil)] is dead !! – WE HAVE, WE ARE *LIVING FAITH* – CHRIST FULFILLED THE *ROYAL LAW* AND SO SHOULD WE !! – THE 10C ISSUE FROM THE VERY THRONE OF GOD OUR FATHER, THEY ARE HIS VERY CHARACTER, AND THEY MUST BECOME OURS !!

MM Book 2 Chapter 6-16

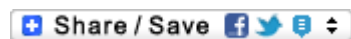
The Works (spiritually/physically) of the Devil are opposed to the Law of God, to the Family:

- 1 you shall have other gods before God, you shall serve me (way of life);
- 2 you shall make images of the Beast, the hierarchical systemic;
- 3 you shall take/carry God's name in vain, you shall worship me;
- 4 you shall NOT obey God's Sabbath;
- 5 you shall NOT honor your mother and father;
- 6 you shall murder;
- 7 you shall commit adultery;
- 8 you shall steal;
- 9 you shall bear false witness;
- 10 you shall covet.

This is a description of a world systemic *of the devil*, of every evil way !! [John 8:44 Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the *lusts of your father ye will do*. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.] — BY DESTROYING THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL (the Works of the Flesh) WE FULFIL THE LAW OF GOD, WE FULFIL *OUR* PURPOSE !! — there is much brilliance in the world but the current, the force of flow lighting and applying that intelligence, is a fallen Angel, NOT THE FORCE AND LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD !! — man took to himself Satan's knowledge of *good and evil* and that is the systemic in the world today; both good and evil are existent, and the evil separates God from man [our sins; our choice of the evil way].

Mammon or Messiah Book 2 [web page](#) (widescreen)

Mammon or Messiah Book 2 [blog home](#) The Midnight Hour



Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:41 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, September 9, 2010

[Day of Trumpets: The Return of Jesus Christ 1](#)

DAY OF TRUMPETS

Section Five of Biblical Holy Days

Compiled by: Richard C. Nickels [article link](#)

Distributed by: Giving & Sharing PO Box 100 Neck City, MO 64849

Introduction

Section Five of *Biblical Holy Days* covers the Day of Trumpets, the only New Moon which is also a Holy Day. The time between Trumpets and Atonement is called the "Days of Awe." The Day of Trumpets is a solemn time of covenant renewal. We need the Kingdom of God, the establishment of which is pictured by the Day of Trumpets.

Our purpose is to provide resource material and in-depth instruction for those who already observe Biblical Holy Days.

Day of Blowing Trumpets Yom Shofar

Divine Appointment Moed

Sabbath Shabbat

An Holy Convocation Mikra Kodesh

Memorial Zikrown

The New Moon Chodesh

Rosh Hashana, "Head of the Year," Birthday of the World, First of Civil Year, A New Beginning, Tithing New Year for Livestock and Vegetables, The Day of Remembrance, Start of Ten Days of Repentance, Year of Release and Jubile, Time of Paying Tithes, Days of Awe, Days of Return, Reading and Expounding Book of the Law, Time to Bend the Knee, Time for Fasting and Repentance, Day of YHVH, Judgment Day, Resurrection Day, Regathering of Israel, Assembling Israel for Meeting, For War, Crowning of the King of Kings, Return of Messiah to Rule World

The Day of Trumpets is the first day of the seventh month, and can never fall on first, fourth and sixth days of the week.

Isaiah 55:6, "Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near."

I Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Zechariah 14:4, 9, "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives And the LORD shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and His name one."

I Corinthians 15:51-52, "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Revelation 11:15, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."

The Day of Trumpets

Day of Trumpets Is a Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets

Leviticus 23:24-25, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath [Jewish translation, "shall be a solemn rest unto you"], a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

Numbers 29:1-6, And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savor unto the LORD; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish; And their meat offering And one kid of the goats for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you: Beside the burnt offering of the month, [see Numbers 28:11-15] and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering [Numbers 28:3], and his meat offering, and their drink offerings . . . a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles) and Revolution of Year

Exodus 23:16-17, . . . and the feast of ingathering which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field. Three times [seasons] in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God.

Exodus 34:22-23, And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end [margin: "revolution of the year"].

NOTE: The Day of Trumpets is the first day of the civil year. That is why Jews call it Rosh Hashana, "head of the year." The Feast of Tabernacles is the end of the sacred year, the last of the holy day season. Trumpets is associated with Tabernacles. Trumpets will become the New Year with the return of the Messiah.

Ezra Read Law to the Returning Jews From Captivity

Nehemiah 8:1-12, And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein . . . from the morning until midday . . . and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law . . . and the Levites caused the people to understand the law So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly [with interpretation], and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. And Nehemiah . . . and Ezra . . . and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is Holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be you sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

The Day of Trumpets is New Moon, With Blowing of Trumpets

Numbers 10:10, Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with trumpets over your burnt offerings . . . that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.

Psalms 81:3-4, Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed [Hebrew: "at the full moon"], on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.

NOTE: Properly translated, this verse does not show the Day of Trumpets is a feast (Hebrew: hag or chag) day. It is a festival (moed), but not a Feast Time (hag) like Passover/Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

Numbers 28:11, And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot.

New Moons are one of the Three Types of Sacred Times

II Chronicles 31:2-3, And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites . . . [for the service of] [1] the sabbaths, and for [2] the new moons, and for [3] the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the LORD.

Ezekiel 45:17, . . . in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths

NOTE: Since the Day of Trumpets is the only new moon that is a holy day, it is also spoken of as "the new moon."

Amos 8:4-5, O ye that swallow up the needy, Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat . . . falsifying the balances by deceit?

Ezekiel 46:1, 6, The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened . . . in the day of the new moon

Colossians 2:16, Let no man therefore judge you . . . in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon or of the Sabbath days.

Trumpets Used to Notify, Warn or Assemble Israel for War

Numbers 10:2-9, Make thee two trumpets of silver . . . for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee . . . they shall blow an alarm for their journeys And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations. And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.

Jeremiah 4:19, My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart . . . the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

Amos 3:6, Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?

Examples of trumpets to call soldiers to battle: (1) Phinehas, Numbers 31:6; (2) Ehud, Judges 3:27; (3) Gideon, Judges 6:34, 7:8-22; (4) Saul, I Samuel 13:3.

Trumpets Used as a Sound of Peace, End of Strife

II Samuel 2:28, So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

See also 18:16, 20:22.

Trumpets Signified Crowning a King, or Revolt

II Samuel 15:10, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

II Samuel 20:1, . . . a man of Belial . . . Sheba . . . blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David . . . every man to his tents, O Israel.

I Kings 1:34, 39, And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon . . . and all the people said, God save King Solomon.

II Kings 9:13, Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

II Kings 11:12, 14, . . . they made him [Joash] king, and anointed him . . . the king stood by the pillar, as the manner was . . . and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets

Trumpet Used in Temple Worship

Solomon's Temple was dedicated during the feast of the seventh month:

II Chronicles 5:3, 12-14, 7:6, . . . in the feast which was in the seventh month . . . an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets: It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; . . . for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God . . . the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.

The foundation of the second temple was just after the Day of Trumpets.

Ezra 3:6, 10, 11, From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid . . . And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, . . . they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

Trumpets were used in worship, I Chronicles 15:24, 16:42, etc.

God's Voice is Full of Awesome Power, Like a Trumpet

Revelation 1:10-11, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

Revelation 4:1 . . . a door was opened in Heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me.

Psalms 29, [whole chapter, especially verses 4, 10:] The voice of the LORD is powerful [in power]; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty [in majesty] . . . The LORD sitteth King for ever.

God's Trumpet-Like Voice at Mt. Sinai

Exodus 19:16, 19, . . . on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings . . . and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled . . . And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice.

Exodus 20:18, And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet . . . they removed, and stood afar off.

God's presence is far more awesome than even this! And we must listen to what he says, and fear and respect Him!

Hebrews 12:18-29, For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched . . . And the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words . . . For they could not endure that which was commanded . . . But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God . . . See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh . . . Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven . . . [Let us therefore] serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.

Day of Trumpets Should Place Us in a Reverent Attitude

Amos 3:6, Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?

Psalms 2:11, Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Hebrews 10:31, It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Trumpets and LORD's Judgment Day

Joel 2:1, 2, 11, Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness . . . And the LORD shall utter His voice before His army . . . for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

Zephaniah 1:6-7, 14-18, . . . [I will cut off] them that are turned back from the LORD [us, if we fall away]; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor inquired for Him. Hold thy peace at the presence of the LORD God: for the day of the LORD is at hand The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath

Psalm 98:6, 9, With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King . . . for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity.

See also Deuteronomy 32:36.

Message of Day of Trumpets is that We Should Repent

Joel 2:1, 12-13, Blow ye the trumpet in Zion . . . for the day of the LORD cometh Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God

Joel 2:15, 19, 32, Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly Yea, the LORD will answer . . . whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered

Zephaniah 1:14, 16; 2:3, The great day of the LORD is near . . . a day of the trumpet Seek ye the LORD, . . . it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger.

Christ Comes to Rule Earth on the Day of Trumpets

Psalm 47:5, 7, 8, God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet For God is the King of all the earth . . . God reigneth over the heathen: God sits upon the Throne of His holiness.

Zechariah 9:14, And the LORD shall be seen over them, and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

Revelation 11:15, And the seventh angel sounded [the seventh trumpet] . . . The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.

Righteous Dead Will Be Resurrected on Trumpets

Matthew 24:31, And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds

I Corinthians 15:52, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

I Thessalonians 4:16-17, For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

For the righteous, instead of a day of wrath, the trumpet will signify a day of joy.

Psalm 89:15, Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of Thy countenance.

Psalm 98:6, With trumpets and sound of the cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.

Message to us on the Day of Trumpets: Better be alive now or you will never be resurrected later!

Ephesians 5:14-16, Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead [Isaiah 26:19 compared with Isaiah 27:13], and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Israel To Be Regathered at the Sound of the Trumpet

Isaiah 27:12-13, . . . ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the Holy mount at Jerusalem.

God's Work Must Warn World With the Voice of a Trumpet

Isaiah 58:1, Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

This crying like a trumpet must be inspired.

Judges 6:34, But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet.

God's ministers are like watchmen:

Jeremiah 6:17, Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.

Ezekiel 33:3-6, If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; . . . his blood shall be upon his own head . . . But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned . . . his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

I Corinthians 14:8, For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

Trumpet used to rally God's people:

Nehemiah 4:19-20, [during the rebuilding of the Jerusalem wall] . . . The work is great and large, and we are separated on the wall, one far from another. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us [Nehemiah, the leader]: our God shall fight for us.

Some Keep The New Moon and Other Feast Days in Vain

Mark 7:7, Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Amos 8:4-5, 10-11, Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat . . . falsifying the balances by deceit? . . . I will turn your feasts into mourning . . . and the end thereof as a bitter day. [because they do not keep God's feast days and Sabbaths with the right attitude] Behold, the days come . . . that I will send a famine in the land, . . . of hearing the words of the LORD.

Hosea 2:8-11, For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, [margin: wherewith they made Baal]. Therefore will I return, and take away [my blessings] I will also cause all her mirth [revelry] to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

Isaiah 1:11-15, [Jewish translation] To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? . . . Bring no more vain oblations; It is an offering of abomination unto Me; new moon and Sabbath, the holding of convocations -- I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed seasons My soul hates . . . And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you . . . your hands are full of blood.

NOTE: The phrase "your feasts" does not necessarily mean that they were keeping days different than God instituted, but that they were not "God's feasts" in the sense that they were not kept unto the LORD, but for human vanity and pretense.

New Moons Will Be Religiously Observed in the Millennium

Isaiah 66:23, And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the LORD.

See also Ezekiel 45:17; 46:3, 6.

Trumpets, Atonement Closely Related

Joel 2:15, Blow a trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. [Why? verse 1, the day of the LORD is at hand] Blow ye the trumpet in Zion . . . for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand. [What should we do because of this nearness?, verses 12-13] turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting . . .

Leviticus 25:9, Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee [50th year of release, or liberty, when every man returns to his possessions, verse 10] to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.

NOTE: Christ's coming is likened to a jubilee year, in which He releases the world from bondage to Satan. He comes on the last trumpet (Revelation 11:15) so here we see that the relation between Trumpets and Atonement demonstrates that one of the first things Christ does when He returns is to give liberty [jubilee] to the earth.

The Day of Trumpets is a Memorial

Memorial is from the Hebrew word zikrown, which means memorial, record, remembrance. Passover and Trumpets are both Holy Day memorials. Passover reminds us of Israel's exodus from Egypt and the death of the Messiah. Trumpets is a memorial of the greatest event in human history: the return of the Messiah to establish His kingdom.

Exodus 12:14, 13:9, And this day [Passover] shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever . . . And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.

Leviticus 23:24, . . . a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.

Numbers 10:10, Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.

Joshua 4:7, . . . That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

Malachi 3:16, Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name.

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Day of Trumpets: The Return of Jesus Christ 2

DAY OF TRUMPETS

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Jewish Understanding of Day of Trumpets

Festivals of the Jewish Year, By Theodor H. Gaster (New York, 1953).

The Day of Trumpets is also known as Rosh Hashana the (civil) New Year, The Day of Remembrance, Judgment Day, and the start of the Ten Days of Penitence. It is a day of remembering the beginning of the world, and a commemoration of the dead (who will be resurrected on that day). This is why, with the Day of Atonement, the Day of Trumpets is one of the two great solemn holydays. New Year's Day is thus a day of judgment and a new beginning. Not merely the anniversary of creation, it is a renewal of creation (the time everything will be made new, at the Messiah's return).

Jews associate with New Year's Day two important Biblical events: (1) Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in obedience to God, and the reward God promised him as a result of his faithfulness. This incident, by Jewish tradition, took place on Tishri 1. (2) The birth of Samuel was said to have taken place at New Year, and Hannah's promise to God and Samuel's miraculous birth are recounted by Jews at the Day of Trumpets. (Trumpets signifies our birthday into God's kingdom.)

The blowing of the ram's horn -- shofar -- was done not only on Tishri 1, but on every new moon. It recalled the giving of the Law at Sinai with the great thunders and trumpet-like voice of God, when His covenant was made with Israel (Exodus 19:16,19; 20:18). The holy days always look forward, as well as backward. The shofar also points to the day God will intervene in world affairs, when "the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south," Zechariah 9:14, when the Last Trump will be blown, the rallying call of Israel in the final battle for the Kingdom of God (Zechariah 14).

During the time of the Temple, Jewish worship included the act of prostration, or kneeling; but Jews are today forbidden to kneel in worship except on the Day of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement. Part of the Jewish ceremony is the incantation, "We bend the knee . . . and make acknowledgment before the supreme King of Kings, the Holy One"

Trumpets Scripture Readings

Psalms which begin with "The LORD reigneth," were originally designed for recitation at the new year festival. See Psalm 93, 97, and 99.

Three types of shofar notes are blown: (1) a short base blast ending abruptly, (2) a long resonant blast, and (3) "quavers," a series of trills, like a person wailing in distress. The shofar is blown at set ways during the Jewish service after which various verses are recited: (1) "Kingship verses," to celebrate God's kingship, Exodus 15:18; Numbers 23:21; Deuteronomy 33:5; Psalm 22:28, 24:7-10, 93:1; Isaiah 44:6; Obadiah 1:21; Zechariah 14:9; Deuteronomy 6:4; (2) "Memorial verses," Genesis 8:1; Exodus 2:24; Leviticus 26:42; Psalm 111:4, 5, 106:45; Jeremiah 2:2; Ezekiel 16:60; Jeremiah 31:20; Leviticus 26:45; and (3) "Shofar verses," Exodus 19:16, 19, 20:18; Psalm 47:5, 81:3, 98:6, all of Psalm 150; Isaiah 18:3; Zechariah 9:14; Numbers 10:10.

Days of Penitence (Repentance)

Beginning on the Day of Trumpets and ending on the Day of Atonement is what Jews call the "Ten Days of Penitence," or "Days of Awe," dedicated to the inner cleansing of the man. They are also known as "Days of Return," because we are to examine ourselves and return to God.

Jewish tradition relates that figuratively, on Trumpets, God opens three books: (1) the first containing the names of the righteous, who are in the book of life, (2) the second contains the names of those irremediably wicked whose fate is death, and (3) the third book has the names of those in between, who have until Atonement to determine their fates. (Thus, Jews understand that there are three resurrections, three classes of people God deals with.) One of the verses Jews recite during these days is Exodus 34:5-7, 9, which emphasizes repentance and God's mercy. Revelation 20:12-15 refers to God's book of eternal life.

The weekly Sabbath between Trumpets and Atonement is known as Sabbath Shubah ("return"), meaning "repentance Sabbath." Hosea 14:1-9 and Micah 7:19-20 are read on this Sabbath. Repentance is the vehicle God has assigned through which man may reach Him. The only way to approach God is through repentance. The value of repentance is also emphasized by the Biblical example of King Hezekiah, who, when upon his deathbed, pleaded with God for mercy. God granted Hezekiah's request and extended his life for fifteen years, II Kings 20:1-11.

There are three areas of repentance in Jewish understanding: (1) thought, (2) speech, (3) action. Unless one corrects his actions, he is not truly repentant.

Meaning of Trumpets

Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1950).

Trumpets were used to signal Israel during their march through the wilderness, to summon them to war, proclaim days of public rejoicing, and to mark the beginnings of their months. According to Numbers 10:10, every time the trumpets were blown, it was a public acknowledgment that the LORD is God, He is King.

Accordingly, in the New Testament, God's elect will be summoned by the sound of the trumpet in the day of Christ's coming, not only the living, but "the dead in Christ," Matthew 24:31, I Corinthians 15:52, I Thessalonians 4:16. Also, the heavenly hosts are marshalled to war until the seventh angel sounds the last trumpet and Christ is proclaimed King Universal, Revelation 8:2, 10:7, 11:15.

A Solemn Time of Covenant Renewal

Rabbi Louis Jacobs, *A Guide to Rosh Hashanah* (London, 1959).

Joy and sadness are twins, and the closeness of these two are never seen more clearly than at the New Year. Rosh Hashanah is a solemn festival but it is a festival. It is not unusual for men and women to change their lives under the influence of the stirring worship services of the "Days of Awe" of which Rosh Hashanah is the first.

The first day of the agricultural year, Trumpets is also the time Ezra read the Law to the captives returned from Babylon, Nehemiah 8:1-8. Hence the festival is associated with personal renewal of one's covenant with God and firm resolution (New Year's resolution) to obey God's law.

Rabbis felt that Rosh Hashanah is the day all men pass before God like sheep, and he judges them. Thus, the feast is not only a "Day of Judgment" but a "Day of Remembrance," for God remembers sins that proud humans forget, and remembers good deeds which humble men belittle or forget.

Jewish Customs With Meaning for Us

Elul, the sixth month, precedes Tishri. Jewish tradition holds that Moses went up on Sinai on Elul, to receive the second tablets of stone, stayed there 40 days, until the Day of Atonement when he brought the Law again to Israel.

Jews read Psalm 27 during the month of Elul. Verse 1, "The LORD is my light," [compare with "brightness of His coming," II Thessalonians 2:8, this is referring to the Day of Trumpets] and my salvation [referring to the Day of Atonement, on which our sins are atoned, see Leviticus 16:34] shows that this Psalm is about the Fall Festivals. Verse 5, "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock [Petra?]," refers to the Day of Tabernacles. The theme of Psalm 27 is about faith and trust in God, the desire "to dwell in God's house," the appeal to God to not hide His face, teach us His ways, answer our prayers. This Psalm evokes an introspective mood, which is the purpose behind the solemn days of Trumpets and Atonement.

Jews also read Micah 7:19, "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," reminding us that God will forgive. Jews have a custom of going to a river and reciting this and other penitential verses. A "custom" that we may do on the Day of Trumpets is to remember our baptism, considering whether we have really buried the old self. "Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, Call ye upon Him while He is near," Isaiah 55:6, implies there is a time when it is easiest to seek God. Jewish Rabbis feel that the Ten Days from Trumpets to Atonement are such a special time, when men should submit themselves to severe self-scrutiny in the effort to improve the quality of their lives.

A Jewish custom during and after Trumpets is to greet one another with, "May you be inscribed (or sealed) in the Book of Life for a good year." Stopping and considering whether or not you are in the Book of Life is a good lesson for us today of the Feast of Trumpets (see Revelation 3:5).

Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) wrote: "The horn blown on New Year's Day at the peak of the festival stamps the day as a 'day of judgment' . . . [on this day] the individual in all his naked individuality stands before God."

Maimonides, the great Jewish teacher, summed up the meaning of the Trumpets as follows: "Awake, ye slumberers, from your sleep and rouse you from your lethargy. Make search into your deeds and turn in repentance. Remember your Creator, you who forgot truth in the trifles of the hour, who go astray all your years after vain illusions which can neither profit nor save. Look to your souls and mend your ways and your actions let every one of you leave his evil path and his unworthy purpose. Seek the way of God; this is the meaning of life."

Trumpets and Atonement are Serious Days of Awe

The Jewish Festivals by Hayyim Schauss (Cincinnati, 1938).

Both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur "are different, in atmosphere, from other Jewish festivals and are therefore known as the 'Days of Awe.' In all other festivals the spirit is one of exalted joyfulness. The exaltation of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, however, has no traces of joy, for these are profoundly serious days, with a feeling of the heavy moral responsibility which life puts on all."

Day of Trumpets in the Talmud and Jewish Writers

According to Rabbi Eliezer, the creation began on Elul 25, and on the sixth day from this, Tishri 1, Adam was created.

--Leviticus Rabbah, 29.1

(COMMENT: This would make the first Sabbath Tishri 2. But calendar rules forbid Tishri 1 from falling on a Friday.)

The first day of Nisan is the New Year for kings and festivals; but the first of Tishri is the New Year for the tithe of cattle and vegetables, reckoning of the years, and for release and jubilee years. At four times, judgment is passed on the world: at Passover in respect of produce; at Pentecost in respect of fruit, at New Year all men are judged, "He that fashions the heart of them all, that considers all their doings," Psalm 33:15; and on Tabernacles judgment is passed in respect of rain. --Rosh Hashanah 1.1-2

Rabbi Judah says: "Man is judged on New Year and his doom is sealed on the Day of Atonement." R. Jose says: "Man is judged every day, as it says, 'and you do visit him every morning,' Job 7:18." R. Nathan says: "Man is judged every moment, as it says, 'You do try him every moment'."

--Rosh Hashanah 16a

The fate of everything in nature is under judgment on Rosh Hashanah, and is sealed on various days: the fate of grain on Passover, fruit on Shabuot, water on Sukkot, "the fate of man, however, is sealed on Yom Kippur." --Rosh Hashanah, 16a

On New Year, Sarah, Rachel and Hannah were remembered on high [and they conceived]; on New Year Joseph went forth from prison; on New Year the bondage of our ancestors in Egypt ceased [although their exodus was delayed until Passover].

--Rosh Hashanah 10b - 11a

The Hallel Psalm [Psalm 146-150] are not sung on the New Year and on the Day of Atonement, because: "Is it possible that the King should sit on the throne of judgment, with the books of those destined to live and destined to die before Him, and Israel should sing a song before Me?" --Arakhin 10b

The shofar was created for the welfare of Israel. The Torah was given to Israel with the sound of the shofar, as it is said: "When the voice of the shofar waxed louder and louder," Exodus 19:19. Israel conquered in the battle of Jericho with the blast of the shofar: "When the people heard the sound of the shofar that the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat," Joshua 6:20. Israel will be advised of the advent of the Messiah with the sound of the shofar: "And the Lord God will blow the shofar Zechariah 9:14." And the Holy One . . . will sound the shofar at the ingathering of the exiles of Israel to their place: "and it shall come to pass in that day, that a great shofar shall be blown; and they shall come that were lost in the land of Assyria, and they that were dispersed in the land of Egypt; and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem," Isaiah 27:13. --Eliyahn Zuta 2

Rosh Hashanah is a day of judgment with mercy and Yom Kippur is a day of mercy with judgment. --Moses Nahmanides

Miscellaneous

Trumpets is also known as the Day of Judgment, Day of Remembrance, Trumpet Feast or Day of Concealment (it being the only festival which falls at the beginning of the month when the new moon is still concealed). It is also the Birthday of the World, in which creation was "completed" with the creation of Adam.

Cain and Abel were said to have offered their sacrifices on Rosh Hashanah, the time of paying tithes. The binding of Isaac as a sacrifice was on Rosh Hashanah, and because the ram was sacrificed in his stead, its horn is used for the shofar.

Jacob was said to have arrived at Bethel on New Year, where he built an altar.

Rosh Hashanah can never fall on a Sunday, Wednesday or Friday. This is the Sacred Calendar arrangement so Atonement can never fall on a Friday nor Sunday. Thus there would never be the possibility of having two consecutive days on which it is forbidden to prepare food and to bury the dead.

Isaiah 55:6, "Seek Lord when He is near." When is God near? During the Ten Days of Repentance [Tishri 1-10]. --Otzar Midrashim, page 495

"On Rosh Hashanah we should go about with a subdued spirit; on Yom Kippur with an exalted spirit." --Rosh Hashanah, 26

Sound the Shofar so that God may recall the martyrdom of Isaac, and consider it as if you too are ready to suffer martyrdom for His sake. --Rosh Hashanah, 16

Rosh Hashanah is a time of judgment, yet Israel is not dejected and somber, but dresses in holiday attire and eats a festive meal. Why? "They are confident of God's mercies." --Y. Rosh Hashanah, 1,3.

Do you ask for God's compassion upon you? Be compassionate then upon your fellow-men . . . the Lord restored the prosperity of Job when he prayed on behalf of his friends [Job 42:10]. When did Abraham have a son from Sarah? When he prayed on behalf of Abimelech. [Thus, Sarah became pregnant on Rosh Hashanah, a time of birth and begetting.] --Pesikta Rabbati, 39

Abraham's sons are judged each year on Rosh Hashanah, the day he offered up Isaac. God remembers Abraham's loyalty when the ram's horn was sounded, for the ram was substituted for Isaac. --Pesikta Rabbati, 41, 6.

10 Animals were sacrificed on Rosh to correspond to the 10 days of repentance, 10 sayings by which the world was created, 10 Commandments. --Pesikta Rabbati, 41, 5.

The Sages said: "And God will say unto Israel -- yea, unto humanity, too -- 'My children, I look upon you as if today, on Rosh Hashanah, you have been made for the anew, as if today I created you -- a new being, a new people, a new humanity'." --Wayyikra Rabbah, 29:10.

Ten Reasons Why God Commanded Us to Keep the Day of Trumpets, by Saadia Gaon (892-942 A.D.)

The first reason: Because this day is the beginning of creation, on which the Holy One blessed be He, created the world and reigned over it. Just as is with kings at the start of their reign -- trumpets and horns are blown in their presence to make it known and to let it be heard in every place -- thus it is when we designate the Creator, may He be blessed, as King on this day, for David said: With trumpets and sound of the horn, shout ye before the King, the Lord, Psalm 98:6.

The second reason: Because the day of New Year is the first of the ten days of repentance, the shofar is sounded on it to announce to us as one warns and says: "Whosoever wants to repent -- let him repent; and if he does not, let him reproach himself." Thus do the kings: first they warn the people of their decrees; then if one violates a decree after the warning, his excuse is not accepted.

The third reason: To remind us of Mount Sinai, . . . The blare of the horn grew louder and louder, Exodus 19:19, and that we should accept for ourselves the covenant that our ancestors accepted for themselves, as they said we will do and obey, Exodus 24:7.

The fourth reason: To remind us of the words of the prophets that were compared to the sound of the shofar, as it is said: Then whosoever heareth the sound of the horn, and taketh not warning, if the sword come, and taketh him away, his blood shall be upon his own head . . . whereas if he had taken warning, he would have delivered his soul, Ezekiel 33:4-5.

The fifth reason: To remind us of the destruction of the Temple . . . , O my soul, the sound of the horn, the alarm of war, Jeremiah 4:19. When we hear the sound of the shofar, we will ask God to rebuild the Temple.

The sixth reason: To remind us of the binding of Isaac who offered his life to Heaven. We should also offer our lives for the sanctification of His Name, and thus we will be remembered for good.

The seventh reason: When we will hear the blowing of the shofar, we will be fearful, and we will tremble, and we will humble ourselves before the Creator, for that is the nature of the shofar -- it causes fear and trembling, as it is written: Shall the horn be blown in a city and the people not tremble? Amos 3:6.

The eighth reason: To recall the day of the great judgment and to be fearful of it, as it is said: The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and hasteth greatly . . . a day of the horn and alarm, Zephaniah 1:14-16.

The ninth reason: To remind us of the ingathering of the scattered ones of Israel, that we ardently desire, as it is said: And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great horn shall be blown; and they shall come that were lost in the land of Assyria . . . and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem, Isaiah 27:13.

The tenth reason: To remind us of the resurrection of the dead and the belief in it, as it is said: All ye inhabitants of the world, and ye dwellers on the earth, when an ensign is lifted up on the mountains, see ye; and when the horn is blown, hear ye, Isaiah 18:3.

Day of Trumpets and Revelation

There are so many staggering problems in the world today. Is there a solution? Yes, thank God, there is!

We need the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God when He was on this earth in human form. This is the message that the churches should be preaching as a warning and witness to the world. This message says that Christ will return and set up the government of God on this earth.

This part of God's Plan for us and the rest of the world is the essence of the Day of Trumpets.

Seventh Month

God's Plan began in the First Month of His Calendar (Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread), continues 50 days later (Pentecost), and will end with the seventh month of His Calendar. The first day of the seventh month (seven is the number for perfection and completion) is the Day of Trumpets which will herald the return of Jesus Christ who will set up the Kingdom of God and bring to an end all that is now wrong in this world.

The Day of Trumpets will begin the Great Fall Harvest, during which time all of mankind that responds to God's call will be saved and become a part of the Kingdom of God.

It is time for those now called to let God's trumpet sound in our lives as we strive to overcome our problems so that we can be in God's kingdom.

Trumpet Plagues

The Day of Trumpets, the pivotal middle festival in God's Plan, is not a pleasant time for earth's inhabitants. It is a time of destruction as God and Jesus Christ tear down Satan's world and prepare to set up the Kingdom of God.

Great plagues are visited upon the inhabitants of the earth as each trumpet is sounded, ending with the Seventh Trumpet and the Seven Last Plagues including the Battle of Armageddon, Revelation 16:16.

Trumpets

Trumpets, in the Bible, often are used for an announcement of war, and the first festival of the Third Harvest period is no exception. Just as a new building cannot be raised until the old and dilapidated one is razed (as much as is necessary), so this world must be torn down in order for the Kingdom of God to be raised up.

God will fight a great war with the evil elements of the earth beginning with the seventh seal of Revelation 8. Here we find seven angels which have seven trumpets ready to sound so as to fulfil the beginning of the Fall Harvest.

Triumphal Return

Although the sounding of the trumpets will bring bone-chilling, terrifying and cataclysmic destruction and ruin to this world, there is also a very joyful note: the heralding of the triumphal return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. With Him He will bring His people (saints) who will reign and rule with Him on this earth. The government (kingdom) of God will bring the wonderful joy, happiness, and peace that this world has agonized and longed for.

The Day of Trumpets comes to fulfillment as Jesus returns to stand on the Mount of Olives. At this time the Mount will cleave in two and healing waters will flow east and west into all the world, Zechariah 14:4, 8.

7 Trumpets of Revelation

7th Seal = 7 Trumpet Plagues (Rev. 8:1-2)

1st Trumpet (v. 7) 1/3 of Trees Burnt

2nd Trumpet (vs. 8-9) 1/3 of Sea Creatures Die

3rd Trumpet (vs. 10-11) 1/3 of Fresh Water Poisoned

4th Trumpet (v. 12) Sun, Moon, Stars Darkened by 1/3

5th Trumpet (Rev. 9:1-12) Bottomless Pit Opened; Locusts, Scorpions; People on Earth Tormented

6th Trumpet (Rev. 9:13-21) Four Angels Loosed; Army of 200 Million; 1/3 of Mankind Killed.

7th Trumpet = 7 Last Plagues (Rev. 15:1,7-8,16:1-21)

1st -- Boils & Sores

2nd -- Sea Becomes Blood

3rd -- Fresh Water Becomes Blood

4th -- Sun's Heat Becomes Red Hot

5th -- Darkness

6th -- Battle of Armageddon

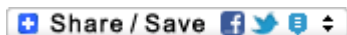
7th -- Thunder, Lightning, Great Earthquake, Great Hail

Christ Returns (Rev. 19:11-16)

Ultimate fulfillment of Day of Trumpets as Kingdom of God is established.

Giving & Sharing Biblical Holy Days [web page](#)

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:01 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

[Holy Days: Family and Community](#)

The Seven Annual Sabbaths

Our inherent value = love and truth; the communitarian way, the environment instituted in the pages of the OT and exemplified in the NT has a built-in reminder to maintain "the continual", the daily worship (the practise of the way): the annual Holy Days, the festivals; the shared symbolic behavior so important to fellowship and cognition.

The seven annual Sabbaths instituted forever not only the Holy Days [God's Plan of Salvation for humanity] but the way of life within, explicit in the harvest feasts: the communitarian way, the *path* [personal achievement of true humanity] - the first day of the sacred year (the annual beginning); the Passover (the sacrifice, the reconciliation, the acceptance; the SAGE attempt to silence); ULB (the putting away of sin, the commitment); Pentecost (the gift of God; a society of the gift); the fall harvest season, Trumpets, Atonement, FOT, LGD: the return Christ, of His message; the putting away of the adversary (Mammon; the alienated, privileged attitudes); the harvest feast (feast of booths, the millennium, the communal reconstruction); the judgement (the Book of Life opened; all of humanity to share in the way).

The **Passover** observance at even (sunset), in the NT the Last Supper; the wine and unleavened bread taken by the Baptised in acknowledgement of the sacrifice of Christ Jesus for the remission of sins and in rededication as the very flesh and blood of the "body of Christ"; the Night To Be Much Remembered, observed the next sunset, was instituted to remember the Exodus of Israel from Egypt (typifies sin), the 7 **Days of Unleavened Bread** [ULB] begin; they picture the removal of sin from our lives; no leavened bread or products of any kind (the puffed-up lives, attitudes); the first and last days are annual Sabbaths; next is **Pentecost**, which pictures God's Gift of the Holy Spirit to the Christian Community, the 3rd annual Sabbath.

The **Feast of Trumpets** pictures the return of Christ; the Second Coming when Christ directly intervenes in world affairs and establishes the government or Kingdom of God over mankind; the beginning of the Millennium; the next event is pictured by the **Day of Atonement**; the binding and separation of Satan, the author of all sin (the transgression of God's Ten Commandments) away from mankind until after the Millennium; next is the **Feast of Tabernacles** [FOT] or Booths, a feast of ingathering, a seven day festival where we leave our homes and gather together if possible; it pictures the Millennium when Jesus Christ is Lord and King over all the earth, when the Holy Spirit is granted to all mankind alive and born during the Millennium and the earth is prepared for the next great event to take place; that event is pictured by the **Last Great Day** [LGD], the resurrection of every man, woman and child who has ever lived/been conceived (including the stillborn and aborted, placed into their parents arms); the dead stand before God; this is the Great White Throne Judgement, not a condemnation to a hell as traditional Christianity believes, but a time when the "Book of Life" is opened to all of humanity and they are given their first opportunity to receive God's instruction, to learn his way of love based on the 10 Commandments and ultimately to be born into the very Family of God.

The spring (3 Sabbaths) and fall Holy Days (4 Sabbaths) picture the plan of redemption for mankind and are explained throughout the Bible; by keeping them as commanded by God every year, the Church (the community) is kept in constant remembrance of God's plan for mankind and man's destiny to be born into the Family of God and ultimately to share in the rule and continuing creation of the universe.

MM Book 2 Chapter 10-17

When we come in contact with, or come up against, "character" that *lacks* God [in others or in ourselves], it is an opportunity to express God: INIQUITY PURGED BY MERCY AND TRUTH [mercy/forgiveness] – all of us have been casualties of the prevailing systemic character, the fear "bullet" [arrow] that is shot deep into us; God will heal the "inflicted wound", and heal us !! — we must pull-back "for" engagement [from the evil; we are in conflict of interest]; WE MUST *OCCUPY* COMMUNITY, WE MUST *PLACE* GOD'S PRESENCE INTO WHEREVER WE ARE [location or situation]; GOD'S CHARACTER AND ABILITIES ARE OURS TO PLACE !! – WE *ARE* GOD FAMILY, WE EMBODY [our being] AND CREATE [our doing] COMMUNITY, THIS *IS* OUR RESPONSE-ABILITY !! — OUR MINISTRY [ministration] IS ** OUR RELATIONSHIP(S) **, OUR COMMUNITY !! – AGAPE LOVE IS THE GIFT, AND THE GIVING !!

"... The three main festivals in the Bible are Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles – in the physical application Passover is the festival of political freedom, Tabernacles of economic freedom, and Pentecost, the central and most important, is a festival of spiritual freedom [see Harris L. Selig, "Links to Eternity", p. 370; Richard C. Nickels, Giving and Sharing, "Pentecost Paper"]:

PASSOVER = POLITICAL FREEDOM – EXODUS (out of bondage), Christ Systemic;
PENTECOST = SPIRITUAL FREEDOM – 10C, Covenant People, Holy Spirit, COG;
TABERNACLES = ECO-NOMIC FREEDOM – Ingathering, Harvest, KINGDOM OF GOD.

Previously posted MMr March 29, 2010

The Final Hour (41y8m): 1990-2031

For Your Consideration:

Four(4) Night Watches: even 6p-9p, midnight 9p-12a, cockcrowing 12a-3a [cry aloud], morning 3a-6a - final "hour" [1000/24] 41y8m [41.666667y / 500m] Psalm 119 "watches of the night", four(4) Watches [of 3 hours each]: ea. Watch = $10.41666675y = 10y5m = 125m / 3 \text{ hrs} = 3.47222225 \text{ yrs} [3y5m20d = 41m20d = 41.666667m]$...

W1 EVEN Jan.1990 + 10y5m = W2 MIDNIGHT May.2000 + 10y5m = **W3 COCKCROWING [to shine, to shed light; voice, disclosure; trim wicks; Matt 24 witness] Oct.2010 *AT* MIDNIGHT [Psm 119:62, Matt 25:6] A CRY MADE** + 10y5m = W4 MORNING Mar.2021 + 10y5m = Sep.2031 SUNRISE(6a) ...

Oct.2010 At Midnight (in the midst of) (Last Great Day/LGD Sep.30.2010; last Sabbath of the seven annual Holy Days) - The Midnight Hour (ref: [Mammon or Messiah Book 2](#)), Trim Wicks ...

Previously posted MMr January 11, 2010

The Annual Feasts and Holy Days [MMmeta article](#)
MM Book 2 Chapter 10 [web page](#) (widescreen)
MM Book 2 [blog home](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:30 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, September 7, 2010

[Michael Lerner: Americans Need National Repentance And Atonement](#)

Americans Need National Repentance And Atonement

By Rabbi Michael Lerner [article link](#) [article link](#)

06 September, 2010 | Tikkun | CounterCurrents

Now that the Iraq war is supposedly winding down, America needs a period of reflection, repentance and atonement before rushing into more of the same mistakes we've been making globally and domestically. So I'd like to invite my non-Jewish neighbors and friends and allies in the struggle to heal and transform America to join with Jews to use the ten days of repentance from Rosh Hashanah (Sept.9) through Yom Kippur (Sept. 18) for that purpose-to create an All-American version of the Jewish High Holidays!

What makes the Jewish tradition useful in this regard is that it focuses not only on our own individual lives, but on taking collective responsibility for our larger world. The formulations of repentance and atonement use language like "Our father, our king, WE have sinned before you" and "For the sins WE have committed by...." (and then the community fills in the blanks).

The notion of collective responsibility means that we acknowledge how impactful the community, its institutions, its worldview, its shared understandings and assumptions, and its daily operations shape the behavior and consciousness of each of us. In contemporary terms, this means: Don't expect a society that privileges money, fame and power and ridicules idealism, prophetic critique and anything not judged "realistic" by the inside-the-beltway commentators and power-brokers to then produce human beings who can look beyond their own immediate self-interest and concern themselves with the well-being of the rest of the world and with the survivability of the planet.

The notion of "sin" in this tradition is also relevant. The Hebrew word for sin is cheyt, and derives from archery-the arrow shot toward the target has gone off course. In my own Jewish Renewal synagogue we expand on this notion by singing the atonement prayers this way: "Who are we? We're God's image and truth and infinite wisdom, eternal goodness. Yet we've abused, we've betrayed, we've been cruel, yes we've destroyed."

Rather than see ourselves as at the core evil, the Jewish tradition sees us as created in the image of God and hence intrinsically good and worthy-and it is with this understanding that Americans can then feel safe to explore where we've gone off course, missed the mark, and hence need a mid-course correction.

It won't take long to help each of us to construct a list of the areas that we need to address in our repentance.

We could start with the easy ones: our inability to stop deep ocean drilling for oil and gas even after the Gulf oil disaster; our inability to limit carbon emissions even though the scientific evidence is clear that rising emissions are above the level consistent with continuing human life (and possibly all life) on earth; our inability to acknowledge the pain we've inflicted on the Iraqi people by our invasion, pain manifested not only in having let loose a war that killed over 100,000 Iraqis and caused hundreds of thousands of casualties and millions of people fleeing their homes and becoming permanent refugees; our ruthless attempts, aided by drones, to kill or imprison immigrants who have been driven to our country by the economic devastation brought by American trade agreements that wiped out local agricultural competitiveness for small farmers in South and Central American countries; our continuing legacies of racism, sexism, and homophobia which have not decreased even when prominent women and blacks assume national office or head major corporations; our growing Islamophobia leading some to participate in public burning of the Koran; our dedicating huge national resources to bailing out banks and investment companies while refusing anything comparable to the unemployed, under-employed, and those facing impossible-to-pay mortgages whose prices escalated dramatically when lenders invoked their small-print "rights" to raise monthly payments without limit; and the continuing degradation of the human rights fought for by the American Revolution but now being undermined in the name of a war on terror.

We have plenty of communal sins to address. Yet the cultural speed with which we forget and rush ahead, accelerated by the internet and by our sound-byte politics, makes it unlikely that we will ever have this badly needed community reflection and atonement unless we create a common ritual for doing so. President Obama is unlikely to help us do that-so this is one reason Americans might consider using the spiritual technology of the Jewish High Holidays to create public events in which we engage each other in public in this kind of a process.

Rabbi Michael Lerner is editor of [Tikkun](#), chair of the [Network of Spiritual Progressives](#) (the interfaith organization, open to atheists as well, which is leading a campaign for a [Global Marshall Plan](#) and for the [ESRA--Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution](#), and author of 11 books (most recently the 2006 national best seller [The Left Hand of God: Taking Back our Country from the Religious Right](#). He is also rabbi of [Beyt Tikkun](#) synagogue in Berkeley, California. Please feel free to circulate this to your friends and everyone on your email lists or to post it on your websites. And if you or they want these kinds of messages to continue, please make a tax-deductible donation to Tikkun or join the Network of Spiritual Progressives.

Creating a Communal Atonement in Your Community

Invite your friends this year, and your larger community next year, to try this ritual. If your community assembled for the purpose of repentance and atonement, it might start by people reciting together the following "For the sins..." communal acknowledgment and then meet in small groups to discuss each one.

We Americans take collective responsibility for our own lives and for the activities of the community and society of which we are a part. We affirm our fundamental interdependence and interconnectedness. We have allowed others to be victims of incredible suffering, have turned our backs on others and their well-being, and yet today we acknowledge that this world is co-created by all of us, and so we atone for all of it.

While the struggle to change ourselves and our world may be long and painful, it is our struggle; no one else can do it for us. To the extent that we have failed to do all that we could to make ourselves and our community all that we ought to be, we ask God and each other and all the people on our planet for forgiveness-and we now commit ourselves to transformation this coming year, as we seek to get back on the path to our highest possible selves and most ethically and ecologically sensitive country we can possibly be.

We take communal responsibility and atone:

For the sins we have committed before You and in our communities by being so preoccupied with ourselves that we ignore the larger problems of the world;

And for the sins we have committed by being so directed toward outward realities that we have ignored our spiritual development;

For the sins committed in the name of the American people through our invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and the violence we used to achieve our ends;

And for the sin of not rebuilding what we have destroyed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan;

And for the sin of failing to prosecute those in our government who enabled the torture of prisoners around the world and in American detention centers and the denial of habeas corpus and other fundamental human rights;

And for the sin of not demanding that our elected representatives provide affordable health care and prescription drugs for everyone, and for the sin of not demanding that they make the dramatic changes that are needed to save the planet or to lessen the power of big money to shape our democratic process to serve the interests of the corporations and the wealthy;

For the sin of those of us in the West hoarding the world's wealth and not sharing with the 2.5 billion people who live on less than two dollars a day;

And for the sin of supporting forms of globalization that are destructive to nature and to the economic well-being of the powerless;

For the sins of all who became so concerned with "making it" and becoming rich that they pursued banking and investment policies that were destructive not only to their investors but to the entire society;

And for the sin of honoring the wealthy for their wealth but not the wise for their wisdom, the artists for their creation of beauty, or the prophets for their sounding the alarm of concern about the ways we have all gone astray and "missed the mark"

For the sin of being cynical about the possibility of building a world based on love;

And for the sin of dulling our outrage at the continuation of poverty, oppression, and violence in this world;

For the sin of not being vigilant stewards of the planet or protecting it from those who are abusing it for the sake of private gratifications they are unwilling to share with others or for private profit;

And for the sin of indulging materialism and selfishness, consuming the resources of the earth without regard to the needs of future generations and the need to protect the life-support systems of the planet;

For the sin of believing that major changes in the global economy are "utopian" and hence allowing private profit to dictate destruction of the Earth for the sake of private gain and in defense of "giving people jobs" or "giving people what they want"--instead of redesigning our economy in ways that environmental sustainability would no longer be counterposed to people having enough food, clothing, shelter, energy and mass transportation to sustain a pleasant life with good-enough

material benefits, and in ways that no longer allowed advertising and media to generate wants that could only be fulfilled by denying others their own needs or denying human life on Earth long-term sustainability;

And for the sin of believing that we have to be "realistic" and settle for "the lesser evil" candidates in elections--instead of building political parties and movements that actually reflect our own highest vision of the good;

And for the sin of allowing our media and elected officials to have no problem finding the monies to make wars in Afghanistan, maintain troops in Iraq and Japan and drones in Pakistan, to support close to one thousand U.S. military bases worldwide, and to bail out the banks and the large corporations--only raising questions of where the money will come from and the dangers of inflation when addressing health care reform, environmental measures, or aid to the unemployed, the homeless, and those facing crushing debt or impossible-to-pay mortgages;

For the sin of not doing enough to challenge racist, sexist, and homophobic institutions and practices;

And for the sin of turning our backs on the world's refugees and on the homeless in our own society, allowing them to be demeaned, assaulted, and persecuted;

For the sin of allowing immigrants to be persecuted, exploited, and denied shelter;

And for the sin of ignoring the Torah command to "love the stranger";

For the sin of not sharing responsibility for child-rearing;

And for the sin of not providing adequate community emotional and material supports for those who are aging;

For the sin of being so concerned about our own personal tax benefits that we failed to oppose tax cuts that would bankrupt social services;

And for the sin of being "realistic" when our tradition calls upon us to do "tikkun"--that is, to transform reality;

For these sins we ask the people of this planet and the Earth itself to forgive us.

For the sins we have committed by not forgiving our parents for the wrongs they committed against us when we were children;

And for the sin of having too little compassion or too little respect for our parents or for our children or our friends when they act in ways that disappoint or hurt us;

For the sin of cooperating with self-destructive behavior and addictions in others or in ourselves;

And for the sin of not supporting each other as we attempt to change;

For the sin of being jealous and trying to possess and control those we love;

And for the sin of being judgmental;

For the sin of withholding love and support;

And for the sin of doubting our ability to love and get love from others;

For the sin of insisting that everything we do have a payoff;

And for the sin of not allowing ourselves to play;

For the sin of not giving our partners and friends the love and support they need to feel safe and to flourish;

And for the sin of being manipulative or hurting others to protect our own egos.

For the sin of stockpiling and modernizing atomic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction rather than eliminating these weapons;

And for the sin of spending hundreds of billions of dollars each year on militarism to support the global American Empire--that could be spent on more urgent human needs;

For the sin of giving attention to the sins of our own country (the U.S., Canada, U.K, Australia, France, Italy, Israel, etc.) while not giving equal attention to what is wonderful and positive about it;

And for the sin of avoiding the needed ethical confrontation with what is destructive and immoral in our country;

For the sin of tolerating racism, sexism, homophobia, disrespect for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transvestites,

And for the sin of tolerating anti-Muslim behavior and speech;

For tolerating a global economic system that leads to the death every single day of somewhere between 12,000 and 20,000 children under the age of five from starvation or diseases related to malnutrition of that could be cured with adequate health care and pharmaceuticals;

And for continuing to be puzzled at why some people "hate us" for our insensitivity to the suffering imposed on them by the unfair distribution of the world's wealth and resources that could be remedied through a Global Marshall Plan;

For the sin of not ever having provided reparations to African American families still suffering the aftermath consequences of having their ancestors brought to this country as slaves and then facing a legacy of racism that still plays out today in the economic and political life of the U.S.;

And for the sins of never having provided reparations for Native Americans who are survivors of a genocidal assault on their communities by settlers on the North American continent, or all those other victims of Western colonialism and imperialism throughout South and Central America, Africa, Asia and Australia;

For the sin of not taking hatred of Jews or anti-Semitism seriously when it manifests around the world, among our friends, or in our community;

And for the sin of seeing anti-Semitism everywhere, and using the charge of anti-Semitism to silence those who raise legitimate (though painful to hear) criticisms of Israeli policies;

For the sin of giving disproportionate attention to the human rights violations of the State of Israel while ignoring or giving far less attention to the far greater human rights violations of the U.S., China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Sudan, and many other states;

And for the sin of not acknowledging the human rights violations that are an integral part of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and its blockade of Gaza--and the pain and suffering that they cause, and not acknowledging or providing reparations for the Palestinian refugees displaced in the creation of the State of Israel;

For the sin of teaching hatred about Palestinians or Muslims, and then claiming that it is only they who teach hatred;

And for the sin of insisting that there is no "moral equivalence" between the deaths of innocent Israeli civilians, 9/11 victims, or victims of other terror attacks, and the deaths of innocent Palestinian, Iraqi, Pakistani, or Afghani civilians;

For the sins of tribalism, chauvinism, and thinking our pain is more important than anyone else's pain;

And for the sin of not putting our money and our time behind our highest ideals;

For the sin of allowing and participating in the dumbing down of our culture;

And for the sin of refusing to read longish emails that have important messages, or longish articles in magazines or newspapers, or longish books; thereby conveying to everyone that the short attention capacity generating sound bytes or type-bytes must replace the more complicated and complex thinking required to get a sophisticated and nuanced view of any given reality;

For the sin of not recognizing and celebrating and feeling blessed to experience the beauty and grandeur of the universe that surrounds us;

And for the sin of focusing only on our sins and not on our strengths and beauties;

For the sin of not giving adequate time to developing our own inner spiritual lives;

And for the sin of not building communities that nurture our spiritual capacities;

For the sin of religio-phobia and allowing cynicism to be dumped on those who believe in the possibility of a world healed and transformed;

And for the sin of believing that anything that cannot be verified through sense data or measured is not to be given serious place in our communal lives, but relegated entirely to our private lives;

For the sin of not being present to ourselves or each other;

And for the sin of being so caught up in the struggle for "success" that we didn't give ourselves time to relax, enjoy, and celebrate all that is good in our lives and all that is good in others;

For the sin of not transcending ego so we could see ourselves and each other as we are: manifestations of God's loving energy on earth.

And for the sin of not believing in the goodness of the American public enough to know that all these sins could be overcome when people feel safe enough to go for their own strong desire for a world based on love and generosity.

For the sin of always noticing what is wrong with others or ourselves and not enough attention to what is right in ourselves and others;

And for the sin of not forgiving others or ourselves for the ways that they and we have gone astray;

For the sin of moral relativism and believing that everything is o.k.;

And for the sin of being overly judgmental toward others or ourselves:

For all these, we ask each other, and the people of the world, the planet Earth, and the God/Spiritual Reality/Force of Healing and Transformation of the universe to forgive us and support us to do what needs to be done so that we can stop this kind of sinning and begin to be fuller manifestations of the love and goodness that sustains all life and of which we are an intrinsic part.

Feel free to make copies of this and to send it to everyone you know, post it on your website, or otherwise let people know that there is a [Network of Spiritual Progressives](#) that is bringing this kind of thinking into the global mainstream--and that they (and you) are asked to Join it or make a tax-deductible donation to it in order to help it survive the economic troubles facing all non-profits in this period. -**Rabbi Michael Lerner** RabbiLerner@Tikkun.org

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Sunday, September 5, 2010

[David Michael Green: Our Long National Nightmare Isn't Over, It's Just Beginning](#)

Our Long National Nightmare Isn't Over, It's Just Beginning

by David Michael Green [article link](#)

September 5, 2010 | CommonDreams

In the 1930s, the only thing we had to fear was fear, itself.

Today, the main thing we have to fear is us, ourselves.

Looking out over the horizon, I'm starting to wonder just how many shades of dark there are on the palette. Lately, I get the feeling that we're about to find out.

I wish I could say that this society did our best to fight our demons, but that the odds were simply insurmountable. You know. Like we were just sitting there by ourselves on our remote little Pacific island, a thousand years before telephones and radar when - bang - the tsunami hit, no fault of our own. And we bravely struggled heroically, doing our mightiest to save as many lives as we could.

I mean, if you've got to crash and burn, better to go down with a little dignity and honor, eh?

But, no, not for me, apparently. I'm an American. I live in a country - nay, an empire! - that insists on destroying itself. I'm part of the generation of decline. My people are the fools who perfected the fine art of committing suicide by stupidity.

It's an astonishing act, and one of wide participation.

The nightmare of the right in America edges increasingly close to dragging the country past the point of no return, over the cliff of violent implosion. At this point, there is already little that is missing save the jackboots and broken glass.

The Republican Party was once a moderately conservative, pro-business outfit, until it was hijacked by the oligarchy and turned into a full-on predatory machine, hiding behind the facade of hate mobilizing issues like bogus overseas threats abroad and uppity brown people and demanding women at home. Basically, any way that middle class white males could be distracted from their sinking economic status - through the diversion of a sense of superiority over others, or the supposed threat to that superior status - was employed to cover for a party whose true agenda was to quietly produce the greatest transfer of wealth in all of human history.

Having succeeded dramatically, they are back at it again. It is now transparent, for anyone who cares to look, that the ugly tea party movement in America is an invention of the Koch brothers, Rupert Murdoch, Dick Armey and their sick ilk, once again mobilizing a boatload of fools who are angry, but too stupid to know quite why. This explains their endless rhetoric

about the evils of the federal government, and their simultaneous desire to keep their Social Security and Medicare benies. It also explains their unmatched idiocy in serving as tools for their own destruction. If they succeed, they fail. If they get their champions elected, they lose their government-provided (Shhhh!) goodies. Brilliant.

In any case, the takeover of the GOP by Serious Money is now well into its second stage. Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, it is. Seriously, what is the next step after this one fails to provide any long-term solutions to what ails America, as most assuredly will be the case? For a decade or three now, regressives in America have been showing that they are capable of anything. Which more or less answers that question, doesn't it? If you're willing to savage military icons like John McCain, Max Cleland and John Kerry in order to win elections - and especially after you get away with it every time - you're willing to do anything. If you're willing to mock the 9/11 widows as scheming opportunists, you're willing to do anything. If you're willing to don a tuxedo and joke about missing WMD at a press banquet in Washington, just as you're telling the American military's adversaries in Iraq to "bring it on", you're willing to do anything.

Looking at the rhetoric the right throws in the direction of our president these days, questioning his very nationality (oh, did I mention that he's black?), it's easy to see that they've gone completely over the line. But what's really out of control is what lies underneath this insanity generated for the consumption of an ignorant hoi polloi. And what that is - what you see when you move the slime-infested rock away - is an unfathomably monstrous greed. Watching these folks in action, you could easily get the impression that they had been impoverished their whole lives. That they had been denied everything, right down to food and water. That they had been deprived through poverty especially of their dignity. You know, like the real poor people of this world, the forty or fifty percent of the Earth's population that survives on less than two dollars per day. Those folks.

Instead, we are talking about people who are already fantastically rich. And who, despite this, are absolutely hell-bent on getting richer, even if that means depriving hundreds of millions of people in the American middle class of their middle classness, and in many cases, ultimately of their lives. How do we explain people like this? Are they not essentially sociopathic? Are they not made of essentially the same stuff as those who can kill without guilt or remorse? Especially when you consider that even the greediest among us reach a limit beyond which one can effectively make use of the next dollar and the one beyond that, so that pushing others into poverty is no longer even for purposes of your own benefit, but instead for some kind of sick sport? Aren't these the characters whose essential sickness preachers and philosophers and shrinks have been trying to sort out for millennia?

Whatever the explanation for such illness, the effects of their efforts are certainly plain to see. We're talking here about a class of Americans who have been essentially offended by the diminishment of inequality produced in America during the middle part of the twentieth century, due to the national policies ranging from the New Deal to the Great Society, Republican administrations included. America's socio-economic structure changed dramatically during that time, and almost entirely for the better. A huge middle class that had never existed before came into being. Anti-poverty programs took the worst sting out of living conditions for the poor. And America became the greatest economic dynamo since the Roman Empire. Meanwhile, by the way, the rich remained very, very rich.

But that was not enough. So they have made a concerted effort over the last generation or so to revert the country back to the bad old days of Herbert Hoover and Calvin Coolidge. Think about that for a second. What sort of elevated sickness, what sort of parental deprivation in childhood, what sort of total absence of conscience and consciousness is required to produce a group of people with that mentality?

I wish I knew. But I do know that their plan worked. As Robert Kuttner notes in *The American Prospect*: "For more than three decades, the wages of American workers have been close to flat while economic insecurity has risen massively. Although the productivity of the U.S. economy has doubled in a generation, most of those gains have not been captured by workers. And in the decade that began in 2001, inflation-adjusted wages have fallen for all but the most affluent 3 percent of the population.

"This pattern of deepening inequality was well entrenched before the financial collapse - which only made things worse. In 2006, economists at Goldman Sachs, sounding almost Marxian, reported that 'the most important contributor to higher profit margins over the past five years has been a decline in labor's share of national income.' By 2006, wages as a

percentage of gross domestic product were already at their lowest share - 45 percent - since government began keeping statistics in 1947. In the past three years, the decline in worker earnings has only intensified, as worker bargaining power has been undermined by very high unemployment. As the economy has stumbled toward a feeble recovery, corporate profits and executive bonuses have rebounded smartly, but salaries and wages have not.

"In the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, wages and productivity moved upward in lockstep. Beginning in the 1970s, as government regulation of labor conditions faltered, trade with nations that exploited their own workers increased, and corporations declared open war on unions, the lines diverged. Productivity kept increasing, while median wages were nearly flat."

This is the successful agenda of the right in America, though it has been cleverly masked by the politics of resentment. This has been the real 'class warfare' in the United States these last decades - not, as pouncing regressives instantly scream out in an effort to silence truth, the very occasional and even more feeble attempts by the odd Democratic politician who slips up and mentions what has actually happened. And, as Warren Buffett is honest enough to point out, the war is over and his side won. As Robert Reich noted in a recent New York Times op-ed, the richest one percent of Americans have gone from taking in nine percent of the total national income right before the Reagan era began, to nearly one-fourth of it today. As Reich also reminds us, the last time this happened was in 1928. I would rush to say, "Hey, remember how that one turned out?", but it's pretty unnecessary to crack the history books for that reference, since we're now living it. As just about the stupidest society that ever was, we've decided to get together to explore the fun and exciting question, "What would happen if America had a devastating economic downturn once again, boys and girls?!?!"

There is one big difference between today and the 1930s, however. Once there was a political party in America - the one that did the New Deal and the Great Society - that stood up a bit for the middle class and the poor. But Bill Clinton and Barack Obama have led the Democrats down a different path. Now the party stands for a slightly weaker version of the GOP's plutocracy protection service. And, seemingly, for getting its face bitch-slapped bright red at every possible juncture. Both aspects of the New Democrats are a puzzle, but particularly the latter. What sort of psychology of the self-loathing explains how a Clinton or an Obama can be so passive, even when getting handed their heads by the most scurrilous of creeps on the political landscape, pieces of (allegedly) human garbage who could be destroyed with the slightest show of self-defense, let alone a wee assertion of political courage?

The current White House is such a failure that I am sometimes left scratching my head in understanding why that is the case. The puzzle becomes especially acute if one considers how transparently intelligent Barack Obama is, and how strategically clever they were in running their presidential campaign. It's true, of course, that there are different kinds of smart. Jimmy Carter understood nuclear physics, but not the presidency. George W. Bush understood the presidency, but was otherwise as intellectually vacuous as a mud pie. Still, Obama has shown serious evidence that he has keen political smarts. Until he became president, that is.

One obvious explanation for this puzzle is that the guy, like Clinton before him, is just another flavor of corporate tool. Ya got yer Republican Wall Street marionettes, see, and ya got yer Democratic Wall Street marionettes... That much is clear, but it still doesn't explain why this White House has been as inept as it has. Another claim that some people make is that he just wants one term, and will take the money and prestige and run. The problem with that theory is that he already had the money. And, quite arguably, he could have done better financially by simply writing a third book than by sitting in the Oval Office earning a mere half mil per year. What is absolutely clear, unless there is some radical and nearly unimaginable change of course, is that he will leave the presidency as one of history's great losers, which again suggests to me that he would have been better off just sitting it out. Not to mention all the stress and ever-present death threats he could avoid by just hanging on the sidelines.

Whatever the explanation, the effect could not be clearer. Obama came into his presidency with more wind in his sails than perhaps anyone since Johnson in 1964, and this for a black man with an Islamic name, no less. He then blew it, utterly and completely. The indications of this are everywhere, starting with all the subsequent by-elections which he has turned into 'bye' elections for candidates from his party. Meanwhile, there are Democrats running for Congress today who are literally running TV ads dissing Barack Obama and Nancy Pelosi. And even those who are not mostly don't want the president showing up in their districts before this election.

Now the latest polls are showing Republicans with a ten percent lead in generic congressional ballots. This is the biggest they've ever had in the 68 year history of polling. Meanwhile, half of Republican voters are enthusiastic about voting this November, while only one-fourth of Democrats are. On top of everything else, Republicans are doing this well despite offering nothing in terms of a plan for solving the problems that are upsetting voters. They will cut taxes on the rich. That's it. The entirety of the rest of what they stand for is simply "NO!!!" to all things Demon Obama.

Now, think about this for a second, and bear in mind that when it comes to the GOP we are talking about a political party that the very same polls show voters still hating. How astonishingly inept do you have to be to turn the world upside down on its axis and hand not only resurrection but in fact control of Congress to such thugs, and hugely despised ones at that? What kind of a full-blown multiple-car crash of a politician do you have to be to make the party of Bush, Cheney, Boehner and McConnell seem preferable to the public, by a wide margin?

Wait. Don't answer yet. It gets worse from there. In 2003, the ratio of Democratic to Republican identifying/leaning voters was about 50 to 40 among young voters, known as the Millennial generation. By 2008, via a combination of the effects of both George W. Bush and (candidate) Barack Obama, that ratio had moved an astonishing distance to provide a whopping gap of 62 to 30. Now, less than two years into the rule of Mr. We Are The Ones We've Been Waiting For, it is back to 54 to 40. These are incredible swings in identities that are usually far more stable. And they are incredibly important, because there is good evidence to suggest that voters who select a given party over a series of elections in the early part of their lives wind up keeping that party ID for life. In other words, Democrats had an opportunity here to lock in with an entire generation of voters a hugely disproportionate preference to continue voting for them. Imagine the difference this would have made in elections for the next seventy(!) years, especially over time as these Millennials replaced older, more conservative, voters in the electorate, and as they themselves came to turn out in larger proportion each election cycle, as every generation does when it ages. Democrats could have come close to locking up control of American government for the coming half-century, just as they essentially did after 1932. Instead, the party's leaders have alienated this generation so much that they have returned the identification numbers to the period when George Bush and his party were highly popular. That's a real achievement, folks.

Dan Pfeiffer, Obama's communications director, recently averred that "The public is rightly frustrated and angry with the economy". So far so good, Dan. Very perceptive for a guy in the Obama White House. You should have stopped there, though. Instead, Dan went on to say that, "There is no small tactical shift we could have made at any point that would have solved that problem". You know, I don't really know who Dan Pfeiffer is, but I would say that anyone making this claim should be removed from office, and fast. Indeed, right now I would say that anyone who has the title of Obama's communications director should probably just be taken out back and shot, on account of gross incompetence and lethal negligence. I'm sorry, but these fools are so clueless. This could have turned out so differently, and, moreover, that was obvious in January of 2009 to anyone who had paid attention to American politics for the last thirty years. This White House was not praiseworthy for seeking to be bipartisan. Rather, it was embarrassing for not even knowing who its enemies were.

The worst, though, is what is to come. Obama and the Democrats will get slaughtered in November. This will happen not so much because of the socialist crimes they are alleged by the right to have committed - which are of course utter nonsense - but simply because of what they have not done, which is to solve the country's problems. Yet, because of the socialist, big-spending, freedom-crushing narrative that regressives have successfully fomented and that the administration (including - Hello! - paging COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR DAN PFEIFFER!!) has been completely inept about countering, and because the other post-election option of actually getting it right would appear to be (and would be vociferously made to appear to be, by Republicans) an act of spiteful spitting in the public's eye, the administration will have no option after the election but to tack yet further to the right in the ensuing two years.

That will be disastrous for Obama, for Democrats and for the country. (I could care less about the first two, who deserve it, and frankly I'm leaning that same way for number three on the list as well.) Like Clinton before him, Obama will try to placate voters and Republican monsters with their sponsoring oligarchy by moving to the right. Of course, there is absolutely nothing there except tax cuts for the wealthy (he is already proposing tax cuts for the bottom 98 percent). The Republicans have no other solutions for the economy (or anything else, for that matter), though these dam-busting boondoggles for the fiscally obese are, of course, no solution either. And, like Clinton before him, Obama will be

relentlessly hounded by congressional investigations into every manner of bogus scandal that the fevered minds of the closeted perverts on the right can dream up to keep the administration reeling.

Unlike Clinton, however, there will be one big difference. I often said, back in the day, that the only thing that kept the American public from immolating Wild Bill, and the only thing that kept the Senate from convicting him in his impeachment trial, was that the economy was jumping at the time and Americans were therefore fat, dumb and happy. Today, however, they're merely fat and dumb, and even the fat part isn't a good thing in this case. The public could not possibly be more surly - apart that is, from how surly they'll be in a year or two. Obama has been as idiotic a president as could be created if you sat down with the intention of making one, and they will be happy to watch him get savaged when they have a chance. By bringing timidity and compromise with criminals to bear against multiple severe crises, and by refusing to fight for anything, he has launched a vicious cycle that is sucking him inexorably down, and us with him: He fails to solve the problems, the public gets angry and frustrated, his party loses elections, the right accuses him of everything from being a socialist to a fascist, he says nothing in response, the public gets angrier and more frustrated, his party loses more elections, they are then even more unable to govern than before, the public is about to explode in anger and frustration, he moves to the right and thereby offers even less of a solution to these crises than the non-solutions already on display, and ... so on. And so on, again. Rinse and repeat.

Obama and the rest of the cowardly and corrupt members of his party have guaranteed their own destruction, that's for sure, but that is likely the least unkind thing that history will say about them. If we think about where this all goes next, it becomes clear what these shallow punks are trading away for their pathetic self-interest and unwillingness to fight against treasonous criminals. Democrats will be smashed in the next two elections, and the right will gain full control of the government and full responsibility for the state of the country. At that point, Republicans will have to put up or shut up. Since they will have no remotely viable way to solve the problems people face - since, indeed, their real mission is to make those problems worse, because that is necessary to further enrich their sponsors - they will reach for ever greater means of distraction to keep the public's attention elsewhere. All I can say is, "Watch out, third world countries everywhere".

We know what these people are capable of, though Cheneyism has only hinted at how bad it could ultimately get.

History will record - if there are historians left to record it - that this was a moment of monsters, cowards and indolents: those being the right, the supposed left, and the public, respectively.

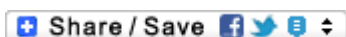
It's the worst of all worlds, and the combination is likely to be catastrophic.

Given the magnitude of the crises we face and the ability of those who would govern us - and those who would be governed by them - to do anything whatsoever in pursuit of their own, narrow, short-term interest, it could well be far worse than catastrophic.

It could be entirely lethal.

David Michael Green is a professor of political science at Hofstra University in New York. He is delighted to receive readers' reactions to his articles (mailto:dmg@regressiveantidote.net), but regrets that time constraints do not always allow him to respond. More of his work can be found at his website, www.regressiveantidote.net.

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Sunday, September 5, 2010

Richard Girard: War Pigs - A Rock and Roll Epistle

War Pigs - A Rock and Roll Epistle

By Richard Girard [article link](#)

September 5, 2010 | OpEdNews

"Generals gathered in their masses,
Just like witches at black masses;
Evil minds that plot destruction,
Sorcerers of death's construction.
In the fields the bodies burning,
As the war machine keeps turning;
Death and hatred to mankind,
Poisoning their brainwashed minds... Oh Lord yeah!"

"War Pigs," Black Sabbath
Paranoid, 1971

Officially Combat Operations in Iraq are now over. *De jure*, as an attorney would say.

De facto, we still have 50,000 troops in harm's way there, officially six "advisory brigades." In the Second World War, 50,000 men was the minimum size for an Army Corps: three 15,000 man divisions plus support troops. We also have God only knows how many mercenaries--I mean "contractors"--in Iraq.

I wish we had real journalists practicing real journalism.

Over four thousand American dead, 31,000 wounded. As many as one million Iraqi dead, many hundreds of thousands injured, millions displaced or driven into refugee camps. Our strategic and diplomatic position in the Middle East is compromised, and we no longer have a local counterpoise to Iran. Nearly a trillion dollars has been wasted in Iraq itself (according to the CBO), to no good advantage for the American people as a whole. Billions more will need to be spent to return our military--especially National Guard and Reserve units--to the state of readiness they enjoyed in January 2001.

And Osama bin Ladin (probably) still lives.

To paraphrase Charles Fox after the Battle of Guilford Court House during our Revolutionary War, "You call this a success: another such victory and I fear for the survival of our nation."

It wasn't "bread and circuses" that bankrupted Rome. It was maintaining a gigantic army in the field, and building monuments to the glory and ego of various Emperors. It was a vicious circle: the legions were in place to insure the collection of taxes--not by the government directly, but by the privatized publicans who grew rich taking their percentage off the top. The taxes were used to maintain the legions in the field, with most of what was left going to the Emperor and his friends to build lavish palaces and other monuments to Rome's (and their own) greatness, after taking a percentage off the top. What little was left in Rome's treasury was used to feed the poor just enough so they did not starve or riot, while the cost of the games themselves were usually absorbed by office seekers wanting to curry the Emperor's favor, or paid for out of captured booty in a triumph.

Booty is considered gauche under our modern democracy, so the modern corporate publicans (most of whom are Republicans) simply bribe--I mean contribute to the re-election of--certain politicians. They then negotiate sweet-heart deals with the people our armed forces put in power in order to plunder the conquered nation of its natural resources. These modern publicans then incorporate offshore. They do this so they do not have to share with the government who made their plunder possible, by paying the Federal Government taxes.

The politicians, unable to tax the people for whom they started the war, then tax the poor, working and middle classes of the United States to pay the cost of the war, while cutting the social safety net that is supposed to protect those people when the economy goes south. Like Rome in its decline, the only jobs program that is currently being offered to Americans is service in the military!

"Politicians hide themselves away,
They only started the war;
Why should they go out to fight?
They leave that role to the poor, yeah."

"War Pigs," Black Sabbath
Paranoid, 1971

I am not entirely convinced that, from a purely materialistic standpoint, the People of Rome didn't have a better deal.

My friends, unless we rebuild our nation's manufacturing base and infrastructure, we will--because of our debt--have no choice in a few years but to reduce our military by half or more.

Cicero stated twenty-one centuries ago that the sinews of war are a limitless supply of money. And real money, true capital, is not the trading of paper instruments at ever inflating values. That is the description of a Ponzi scheme, not any sort of healthy economic system. Real capital is based upon the manufacture, sale and service of material goods and real estate that a man can hold in his hand or stand on.

Currency can be used as the basis of a monetary system, but if, and only if, it is regulated, and allowed to expand when necessary rather than convenient. "Necessary" would include preventing a deflationary spiral of prices during an economic recession.

Even specie--gold and silver--is no guarantee against inflation. Anyone who has read the history of Rome knows that Rome adulterated its coinage at various times because of hoarding, or being forced to use gold and silver to pay for trade items outside of the Empire because Rome had nothing to trade in turn.

This is one of the problems with the gold standard that Congressman Ron Paul is always talking about: unless we are producing more goods than we are acquiring, we will have to pay for them with gold and silver. If we run out of gold and silver, then we have nothing left to trade, and "POOF!", our standard of living is in the crapper, and we have nothing on which to base our monetary "gold standard."

As I pointed out in my recent article "[Right is Wrong](#)" (OpEdNews.com September 1, 2010), conservatives dislike ambiguity. This carries over into a liking for simple, and often simplistic, answers. Unfortunately, such answers are usually wrong.

The problem is when you are dealing with matters of war, you are dealing with nothing but matters of ambiguity.

One of the cardinal rules of war is that no plan survives contact with the enemy. And while Napoleon's dictum about God being on the side of the largest battalions is another cardinal rule, so is Nathan Bedford Forrest's about winning a battle being a matter of getting their "the furthest wit' the mostest."

The Confederacy lost the Battle of Gettysburg, and probably the Civil War, when Stonewall Jackson was mortally wounded at the Battle of Chancellorsville two months earlier. The Japanese lost the Second World War in the Pacific when they lost four of their fleet carriers and their irreplaceable aircrews at Midway. The Nazis lost the Second World War when Hitler failed to take Moscow in September of 1941, before turning south to take the Ukraine. The Soviets lost the Cold War trying to match the West bomber for bomber and missile for missile as much as anything else; Afghanistan was just the coup de grâce.

We have probably lost the war against the terrorists because the Bushes, in the name of oil and profit, turned our attention from Afghanistan to Iraq before the job was finished. They permitted their avarice to introduce an element of ambiguity into what should have been a very simple equation:

- * Kick the Taliban out of the cities and villages.

- * Establish an agricultural program that depended on something other than opium poppies to put money in people's pockets.

- * Build schools, roads, water, and sewage systems, and try to establish an electric grid throughout the country.

- * See to something close to free and fair elections, not a crowning of our chosen puppet.

- * Establish an Afghani military, police, and justice system that the people respect, rather than fear, by making them feel that they are part of the system, not bystanders.

In other words, show them a better future.

It is not impossible, we've done it before. It was called The Marshall Plan.

Oh yeah, that's right, that was a plan under a Democratic President and Administration. According to today's Re-publicans, it can't possibly work.

I would call the Re-publicans what they are, but I've been told not to use that sort of language when writing in public.

"Time will tell on their power minds
Making war just for fun
Treating people just like pawns in chess
Wait 'till their Judgment Day comes, yeah!"

"War Pigs," Black Sabbath
Paranoid, 1971

The Re-publicans are under the misapprehension that the mounting debt will simply permit them to finish killing America's social safety net, rather than cutting the military in half.

I would strongly suggest that they look at what happened to General Pinochet and his military pals in Chile before they make such wild, and unwarranted assumptions.

The Democratic Party can crush the Re-publicans in this election if they will simply follow the advice of President Truman: quit acting like Re-publican Lite and start acting like Democrats.

I think a couple of jobs bills, fast tracked through Congress, even if we have to nuke the filibuster, would give us not only a majority, but a super majority in both houses. Throw in a couple of investigations of Wall Street and the Democratic Party could see the biggest majorities since just after Watergate.

Let the Bush Tax cuts die: the middle class understands that in a time of crisis, we all have to step up to the plate and sacrifice a little bit for the good of the nation. It has always been the plutocrats who want to have their cake and eat it too.

We must also reduce our military budget. Rome kept 25 legions, 150,000 men, under arms, when the entire World's population was fewer than 200,000,000 souls; it did not keep them safe, it bankrupted them. We can no longer afford to spend more on our military than the rest of the world combined: some \$623,000,000,000.00 to \$600,000,000,000.00 in the next fiscal year. Such profligate spending will just as certainly bankrupt us. We must reduce our overseas commitments--including real withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, our nuclear arsenal, and concentrate on putting the defense back in the Department of Defense. I would also at the same time improve some of our defense production infrastructure so that we don't have to buy rifle ammunition from Israel if we become involved in another war.

President Franklin Roosevelt spelled out his vision for America on January 11, 1944, in his annual message to Congress. It was not a vision of empire, but--like George Washington--a vision of honest friendship with all of the nations of the world who were willing to accept it. It was not a vision of plutocrats dominating America, as they had twice in FDR's lifetime, but a vision where his Second Economic Bill of Rights would bring us closer to the realization of Jefferson's pronouncement, "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal..." The essential points of this Second Bill of Rights were to provide:

- * useful and remunerative employment, together with the potential to find an avocation and not simply a job;
- * wages that provide adequate food, clothing, opportunity for recreation, and decent shelter for themselves and their families;
- * adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health;
- * protection from unfair competition and monopolistic practices at home and abroad, for every business in America, large and small;
- * the ability of farmers and ranchers to raise and sell the the bounty of their lands at a return which will give themselves and their families a decent living;
- * protections from the fears attendant to old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment;
- * a good, quality education, sufficient for the needs of our modern society; an education that is ongoing if needed or desired.

This is a vision that can bury the Re-publicans in November.

""No more war pigs of the power
Hand of God has struck the hour
Day of Judgment, God is calling
On their knees the war pigs crawling
Begging mercy for their sins
Satan, laughing, spreads his wings
Oh Lord yeah!"

"War Pigs," Black Sabbath
Paranoid, 1971

Richard Girard is an increasingly radical representative of the disabled and disenfranchised members of America's downtrodden, who suffers from bipolar disorder (type II or type III, the professionals do not agree). He has put together a team to prosecute Bush, Cheney, et al., but has given up waiting for his credentials, and fully expects either the United Nations or Spain to beat him to it. An autodidact, he has read more than 3000 books over the last 35 years, on subjects

including history, mathematics, political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, women's studies, physics, martial arts, science fiction, and art. He is still editing Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, trying to make it comprehensible to someone who is not a Rhodes Scholar. It surprisingly calms the worst effects of his bipolar disorder, acting both as a sleep aid, and helping to keep him out of the funny farm.

OpEdNews [Articles](#) by Richard Girard

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:46 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Saturday, September 4, 2010

[Jim Hightower: If You Don't Fight for the Middle Class, Kiss It Good-Bye](#)

If You Don't Fight for the Middle Class, Kiss It Good-Bye

By Jim Hightower [article link](#)

September 4, 2010 | AlterNet

America's corporate chieftains must love poor people, for they're doing all they can to create millions more of them.

They're knocking down wages, offshoring everything from manufacturing jobs to high tech, reducing full-time work to part-time, downsizing our workplaces, busting unions, cutting health care coverage and canceling pensions -- while also lobbying in Washington to privatize Social Security, eliminate job safety protections, restrict unemployment benefits, kill job-creating programs and increase corporate control of our elections.

It's said that the poor and the rich will always be among us. But nowhere is it written that the middle-class will always be there. In fact, it is a very recent creation in our society (and an unavailable dream for most people in the world). America's great middle class literally arose with the rise of labor unions and populist political movements in the 1800s, finally culminating in democratic economic reforms implemented from the 1930s into the 1960s.

Social Security, wage AND hour laws, collective bargaining rights, unemployment compensation, the GI Bill, the interstate highway program, civil rights laws, Medicare, Head Start -- and more -- provided the national framework necessary to sustain a middle class for the American Majority.

This essential framework was not "given" to us by corporate executives and politicians -- indeed, they sputtered, spewed and fought every piece of it tooth and nail. Rather, it came from union-led grassroots movements, organizing for structural change.

This Labor Day, we see corporate executives and their politicians relentlessly dismantling that framework, piece by piece -- and we see the middle class disappearing and poverty rising with each dismantled piece. But as labor icon Joe Hill said just before he was executed by Utah authorities for his unionizing activities, "Don't mourn, organize." It's time for working families to organize again for the revitalization of the middle class.

Who'll take a stand these days for restoring America's founding ethic of the common good?

You won't get this leadership from Washington -- and damned sure not from those in the corporate suites who're ruthlessly pushing an ethic of uncommon greed, saying to the middle class, "Adios, chumps."

Instead, look to places like Williamson, a town in upstate New York. This is apple country, home to a sprawling Mott's apple processing plant. Generations of families have worked at this plant, and there had not been a labor dispute in over 50 years. But the Mott family is long gone -- and so is the sense of shared purpose that had unified owners and workers.

In 2008, Mott's became a subsidiary of Dr. Pepper Snapple, a giant Texas conglomerate that also owns 7Up, Hawaiian Punch and dozens of other brands. DPS, as it's known, is doing very well, having banked a record profit of half-a-billion dollars last year. But its honchos apparently missed that basic kindergarten lesson about sharing. Indeed, the new owners introduced themselves to the area by eliminating the company's annual summer picnic, the children's Christmas party and other community-building touches.

Then, this March, DPS bosses abruptly demanded pay cuts averaging about \$3,000 per worker, while also slashing pensions and hiking employee costs for health care. Why? Because they asserted that Mott's 300 workers were paid more than others in the area and should simply lower their standard of living accordingly. This from a corporation that paid its CEO \$6.5 million last year! Adding insult to injury, the plant manager called workers "a commodity like soybeans" that can easily be replaced. Take the cuts -- or else, demanded DPS.

The workers chose "else." As we celebrate Labor Day at the beach or at backyard barbeques, they are on a strike for middle-class survival that's now in its fourth month.

This is not just about them, but about what kind of country America will be. If DPS succeeds in knocking down these skilled, experienced, loyal workers, other profitable corporations will follow. The Mott workers are taking a courageous stand for the middle class and our country's commitment to economic justice. To stand with them, go to www.ufcw.org.

[Jim Hightower](#) is a national radio commentator, writer, public speaker, and author of the new book, "[Swim Against the Current: Even a Dead Fish Can Go With the Flow](#)." (Wiley, March 2008) He publishes the monthly "[Hightower Lowdown](#)," co-edited by Phillip Frazer.

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Joel S. Hirschhorn: Why Americans Elect Awful Presidents

Why Americans Elect Awful Presidents

A Delusional democracy which favors corporate, wealthy and elitist interests over those of ordinary Americans

by Joel S. Hirschhorn [article link](#)

September 4, 2010 | Global Research

For years I muttered mentally to myself about the insanity of Americans electing George W. Bush president. Now I go through the same agony about the craziness of the nation electing Barack Obama president. As much as I thought Bush was a manipulated second-rate politician that carried out the terribly destructive policies pushed by Cheney and other conservative corporate shills, now I feel equally angry that so many voters fell for the slick rhetoric and lies of Obama. Disgust produces public thirst for change and Obama was wickedly brilliant at selling change. When voters are so easily victimized what does democracy amount to?

All this tells me that any nation that can elect such inept people president can also elect other people that appear to have no right or chance to be president of the United States just as Bush and Obama once appeared before they were sold to the public. That is what is so frightening about the future of this nation. The two-party plutocracy with its stranglehold on the American political system has the power to elect presidents that are an insult to the great ones that once served the nation with pride and competence.

I keep searching for explanations why millions of American voters make such bad electoral decisions. Are they just so stupid, uninformed and distracted that they fall for endless political lies? Have Americans become so easily manipulated and fooled by advertising and brilliant political campaigns that they can be sold terrible presidents as easily as unneeded, low quality and unhealthy products?

Yes, all this seems too true. Delusional voters have produced our delusional democracy which strongly favors corporate, wealthy and elitist interests over ordinary Americans. This explains frightening economic inequality and the demise of the middle class. In the late 1970s, the richest 1 percent of American families took in about 9 percent of the nation's total income; by 2007, the [top 1 percent took in 23.5 percent](#) of total income (less than 5 million people). Two-thirds of the nation's total income gains from 2002 to 2007 flowed to this sliver of households, which saw a rise of 62 percent, compared to 4 percent for the bottom 90 percent of households. Today, the median male worker earns less, adjusted for inflation, than he did 30 years ago. A corrupt bipartisan system gave us this. Is this the change you were waiting for?

Considering Bush and Obama from a right-left perspective misses their several critical commonalities. Both have wasted the nation's wealth and lives on two ludicrous, unnecessary wars in Iraq and Afghanistan . Both turned out to be pretty good communicators during their presidential campaigns but quite lousy after they became president. The more intelligent and articulate Obama is particularly striking in being totally lackluster when it comes to addressing major issues and crises and building public support for his policies, which now explains his very low approval ratings.

Both pursued public policies and government programs that preferentially benefit corporate and other special interests, especially the financial sector. This is no surprise because both depended on huge amounts of corporate money to get elected. They both have responsibility for the economic meltdown that still exists for a large fraction of the nation. A large majority of Americans correctly see the nation on the wrong track, but more importantly it is hurtling down the wrong track, which President Obama ignores, because he lacks solutions.

What may turn out to be the most disturbing similarity is that Obama may get elected for a second term just like Bush accomplished despite uninspiring performance. If there is anything more disturbing than electing awful politicians with no real record of accomplishments it is reelecting them for a second term! More than anything else this demonstrates the absence of true, effective political competition and the ability to brainwash and manipulate voters.

For years I hoped that some third party presidential candidate would emerge, capture public confidence and offer a true reform program to repair our nation. But sadly the political system has been so corrupted that no third party presidential candidate stands a chance against the two-party plutocracy. The biggest nonsense is that the US is the greatest democracy on Earth. There are many other democracies where multiple political parties give citizens far more choices than Americans have. It pays to remember that no nation ever copied the government structure of the US . Instead, other democracies where citizens also have freedom use parliamentary structures with far more political choices and even the ability to more easily get rid of rotten leaders. Here we suffer with disappointing presidents for far too many years.

The most fascinating aspect of our constitutional republic is that one constitutional path to get true, deep reforms of our government and political system has never been used. This proves how powerful, entrenched interests on the right and left have maintained a corrupt, dysfunctional and costly system. Very, very few Americans know anything about the option in Article V of the Constitution for a convention of state delegates that could propose constitutional amendments. You can learn the facts at the [Friends of the Article V Convention](#) website. The one and only requirement for a convention has long been met but Congress refuses to obey the Constitution. They fear it. We need it more than ever.

A constitutional scholar such as President Obama could make history by openly demanding that Congress convene the first Article V convention. But that would require dropping the constitutional hypocrisy that he and so many others have. The rule of law is a farce when an important part of the beloved Constitution is ignored.

[Joel S. Hirschhorn](#) is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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By Nick Turse [article link](#) [article link](#)

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:26 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, September 3, 2010

[The Hidden Enemy Within: Confront The Evil](#)

The Hidden Enemy Within: Confront The Evil

Cross-post from Mammon or Messiah meta [blog link](#)

The hidden enemy within; losing control of our soul; evil, the power that keeps us from what we want to be; found in ourselves and surrounds us [intention and will within]; dark expressions, forces of pain expressed in human beings - KNOW THYSELF !! - we must open our eyes and ears to the invisibility; we must turn on the lights [knowledge and self-understanding] - evil likes us to fear it [cohesive sentience; it has its own purpose] - we all possess faculties that have a given direction in certain circumstances [ie., pulled down into anger, hate; something in us draws us down, serving a purpose that is unknown to most human beings [maybe a blind mechanical response or a force, a sentience, SATAN] - we are spiritually deaf, dumb and blind; **we have every influence ever created in us; heaven and hell, light and darkness meet in the human soul; these forces are given life by our choices, our decisions; our *relationship* with these forces determine who we are;** self is relationship, we must be awake to what we are in relationship with !! - our mindset, conditioning, projection [movement of thought]; we cannot fix ourselves [psychology] with the very thing which is broken !! - we are in conflict, a divided being, a rift runs through the core of ourselves; "blame away", "explain away", are not answers - we are destroying our planet and ourselves in spite of all the prayerfulness [people resisting the evil]; we

must understand NOT resist; the resisting actually increases the evil; we are fighting with shadows; we are fighting forces that are empowered by our *not* understanding their nature [ref: MM Book 1 Chapter 1-13 [web page](#) (widescreen) or [blog](#)] - we must learn to see into ourselves, we must discern spiritually - there is no such thing as "blind" anger, there is something in us that is angry [relative to our own conditioning; the dark state lives within us]; sympathetic vibration.

Darkness wins because we do not know how it operates; we are unaware that our *unconsciousness* is responsible; the negative state guides us [we remain asleep to its actual nature and action, its dictates] - THE ONLY POWER EVIL HAS IS IN DECEIVING US !! [FORGIVE THEM FATHER, FOR THEY *KNOW NOT* WHAT THEY DO] -- we define ourselves by our problems; our current sense of self [ie., the COG] is rooted in a nature that causes us to repeat the evil in order for us to remain within our false definitions !! - WE MUST TRANSCEND OURSELVES; WE MUST BE WHAT GOD WANTS US TO BE !! - there are parts of us that can only do one thing [a blind mechanical activity of darkness; suggestions serving their blind mechanical need] to restrict, to limit, to draw down - **hatred is a self-imposed restriction; love is expansive, opening; these two consciousnesses are in us [we are sitting between two worlds of darkness and light; we have to choose - answering evil with evil is forwarding evil unto the whole human race [BUILDING HOLOCAUST] !! - EACH SOUL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS OWN ACTIONS !! - to be human is to have crises; we must examine ourselves when things are at their darkest [when we are torn, confused; reaching]; this darkness can be the ground of the new understanding that we see ourselves in [these dark "gifts" come to us bearing choice; the adversarial is actually emissarial], an opportunity presented, and we are responsible for our choices - we do not have to be subjected to what we don't understand, instead we can understand what we are subjected to !! - the issue of justice is a private, individual affair [we must grow in this understanding; the world is on a downward path into war] - we will serve evil pursuits if we do not understand them, and our complicity with them !!**

There is a Hell (of our own creation), tormented feelings, regret - heaven and hell are born out of our fears, not knowing what is, the possibilities - "what may be" can never be the source of integral change within [just another safety blanket (ie., most religions)] - our lives do not change when we die [an object in motion continues in the direction of its motion; we must change ourselves, our direction]; all damage we do to ourselves can be changed by a love of the truth; the damage can be undone !! [GOD IS TRUTH AND LIFE; WE CANNOT CHANGE OURSELVES, BUT GOD'S LOVE CAN !!] - society's pace keeps us from stopping to think, we must take the time to be conscious of ourselves, of our needs [mindful of our helpful thoughts and our hurtful thoughts]; changing our relationship with our inner world; we do not have to live with the pain !! - **the only power the darkness has over us [deception] is in the absence of the light [fear is real in the dark];** illumination vs. domination; dark spiritual forces, conditions, cannot live within the light [GOD IS LIGHT] - fear was never intended to be a form for us; our thought-forms make it real [when we revisit a negative state, we revitalize what we want to be free of]; we must be aware of the evil consciousness, we must dismiss it, reject it [BY GOD'S PRESENCE; HEALING] - keeping in balance; our choice; the dark, the negative seemingly necessary; there is danger here, new understanding [recognition] precipitated by the darkness [WE MUST COME OUT OF THE SIN]; an ongoing relationship of primordial forces existent [THE FEAR (reverence) OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM, A GOOD UNDERSTANDING HAVE ALL THEY WHO OBEY GOD'S COMMANDMENTS (the 10C: walking in the character of God); KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY IS TO DEPART FROM EVIL - EVIL IS *NOT* ESSENTIAL FOR NEW UNDERSTANDING; EVIL (application) IS THE *LACK* OF UNDERSTANDING !!].

The issue of control, the strength of evil; we are in a cage as a result of our limited understanding; powerlessness itself looks for power and control, and by doing so falls victim to the very thing it is seeking power and control over !! - we are evidence of a dualistic self; we express dualism; dualism is not necessarily real, but reality exists in levels - the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was to give the knowledge of the gods [the complexities, the nuances of things; not just knowing the simple good]; free will is [considered today] the result of the choice between good and evil; thus [the first sin] is deemed a gift [ATTRIBUTING GOD'S FREE WILL, FREE MORAL AGENCY, TO SIN, AS SATAN'S GIFT - GOOD AND EVIL IS NOT KNOWLEDGE AS SUCH, BUT THE NATURE OF THE SPIRITUAL APPLICATION, THE WISDOM, THE RELATIONSHIP (knowledge is revealed, taught, discovered)] -- we are beings of choice, to determine for ourselves [our character]; darkness and evil are horrible, but we grow from them; their potential makes us think !! - we see the world through the eyes of our understanding of the conditions existent; evil seems to have the upper hand because humans have gone to sleep; true and false are becoming unknown; we are being misled - the goodness within us must be recognized and fought for [GOD PROVIDES THE ALTERNATIVE] !! - learning and growing; religion seeks to codify experience, which is impossible; we must continue in the life God gives us NOT continue in the life we create for

ourselves; **we must let go of the self with its definitions, then we will see God's definitions !!** -- is righteous anger evil, NO !! - evil is unrighteousness; the cause and effect are different - do the inner evils of our own mind relinquish our choice ?? -- [The Hidden Enemy Within: Confront The Evil 1 and 2 based on multiple sources, including author [Guy Finley](#), on the nature of evil (author Finley denies the existence of Satan)]

Previously posted Feb. 23, 2010

Mammon's Instrumentation of Evil

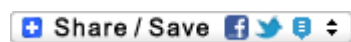
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Let Us Finally Gift The Life That Was Gifted To Us !!

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The Systemic is SELF-DEFINING

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:36 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

John Kozy: The Triumph of Evil

The Triumph of Evil

by Prof. John Kozy [article link](#)

September 3, 2010 | Global Research

Modern societies have justified their adoption of criminal activities by claiming that such techniques are necessary to combat evil. But the war against evil by the good cannot be won using evil tactics. Evil never yields goodness, and by using these evil practices, the amount of evil in the world increases both in amount and extent. Attempting to save the nation by becoming what you are trying to save the nation from is suicidal. Unless benign techniques such as those developed by primitive societies are put to use, evil will prevail. Then, paraphrasing J. Robert Oppenheimer's comment after the first atomic bomb was successfully tested, We will have become evil, the destroyer of goodness.

Some decades ago, while having dinner with a newly elected Attorney General of the State of North Carolina and the Chief Justice of that state's Supreme Court, the jurist told me that everyone involved in the legal system and enforcement had to think like criminals to catch them. He believed the statement to be straight forward and evident until I pointed out that the line between thinking like a criminal and acting like one is very fine and is easily and frequently crossed, which results in increasing the amount of evil in society rather than reducing it. Few apparently notice this consequence and the criminal-like behavior of those charged with enforcing and adjudicating the law has increased so substantially that it has become common practice.

YouTube is replete with videos of police brutality. Police have been videoed beating subdued prisoners, tasering people (even little old ladies) indiscriminately, shooting mentally challenged people they have been called upon to help, and killing people caught committing non-capital crimes who try to escape (sometimes by shooting them in the back). Investigations to determine whether those officers should be held accountable rarely result in any punishment.

People providing forensic information in trials have been shown to have falsified evidence in ways that facilitate convictions. A recent report claims that "agents of the [N.C.] State Bureau of Investigation repeatedly aided prosecutors in obtaining convictions over a 16-year period, mostly by misrepresenting blood evidence and keeping critical notes from defense attorneys . . . calling into question convictions in 230 criminal cases." Similar problems have been found with other forensic labs.

In Dallas, TX, a former prosecutor, Henry Wade, now deceased, has become infamous for having convicted a large number of innocent defendants. Dallas has had more exonerations than any other county in America; yet most requests for the retesting of DNA have been denied by trial court judges on the recommendation of former District Attorney Bill Hill, a protégé of Wade's. Mr. Hill's prosecutors routinely opposed testing. In addition to almost complete reliance on eyewitness testimony, a review of the Dallas County DNA cases shows that 13 of the 19 wrongly convicted men were black, eight were misidentified by victims of another race, investigators, prosecutors, and many of the juries in the cases were all white, police used suggestive lineup procedures and sometimes pressured victims to pick their suspect and then cleared the case once an identification was made, prosecutors frequently went to trial with single-witness identifications and flimsy corroboration and tried to preserve shaky identifications by withholding evidence that pointed to other potential suspects, and judges routinely approved even tainted pretrial identifications. When Bill Hill, who said he was confident his assistants verified the accuracy of all eyewitness identifications was told his office prosecuted one those exonerated, Mr. Hill said the two prosecutors on the case were incompetent holdovers from the previous administration. Terri Moore, the current DA's top assistant and a former federal prosecutor, said, "It's almost like it's the whole system. Everybody drops the ball somewhere, starting with the police investigation. And we just take the case and adopt what the police say."

Then there are those prosecutions that rely on the testimony of criminals who have been bribed to act as informants. Bribery is a criminal activity, and if a defense attorney were shown to have bribed a witness, disbarment would be the likely result; yet prosecutors commonly do it.

The preceding paragraphs limn an ugly picture, ugly indeed!

But the evil is not limited to local law enforcement. When officials realized that they can act with impunity without fear of suffering any personal consequences, the maxim, one must think like criminals to catch them, underwent subtle alterations. Now one must think like bankers to be able to regulate them. The same thing is said of stock brokers, oil men, and every other interest group. Everyone wants to be self-regulated. But self-regulation is nothing but a license to engage in criminal behavior. The whole system of governing becomes an oligarchy of old boys scratching each other's backs. Everyone knows just how well that works out.

Federal agencies, including the Supreme Court, are complicit, too. The Court violates the Constitution routinely. Remember the decision validating the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII? Other decisions, perhaps not quite so obvious, can easily be cited. The FBI and Homeland Security routinely violate the privacy provisions of both the Constitution and the law, and the courts have failed to intervene. The CIA has become an official version of Murder, Inc., now even advocating the assassination of Americans living abroad who have been labeled "terrorists." The agency has become the dispenser of vigilante justice, while Americans are told to never take the law into their own hands.

No one seems to realize that the war against evil by the good cannot be won using evil tactics. Evil never yields goodness, and by using these evil practices on the pretext of fighting evil, the amount of evil in the world increases both in amount and extent. Attempting to save a nation by becoming what you are trying to save the nation from is an act of national self-destruction; it is suicidal.

So how can the good be expected to fight evil?

Edmund Burke's claim, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing," is often cited. Sounds good, doesn't it? But the claim falls into the category of notions that Michael Faraday labeled "favorite ideas," and he warned us to be leery of them. Think about it for just a minute. Are people who do nothing really good?

Anyone who has watched network television over the past decade has seen stories about people who have seen crimes taking place without ever intervening and people collapsing in the street without ever stopping to render aid. ABC News currently has a series, titled What Would You Do?, that stages illegal acts in public places to see how unaware bystanders respond. Many do nothing. The implication of these stories is that there's something wrong with such people.

In fact, no one knows what the ratio of good to bad people in society is. Perhaps there simply are not enough good people to make a difference no matter what they do. But even supposing, as most people do, that the good outnumber the bad, few realize how hard it is for the good to fight evil.

Good people are repelled by it; they can never employ it even with the best of intentions; they know multiple wrongs never make right. So what are they to do?

They can, of course, rail against the evil. Some like the ACLU, the Innocence Project, and others file lawsuits, others expose evil by requesting documents through the Freedom of Information act and by becoming whistleblowers. Although all of these actions are worthwhile and often result in combating specific wrongful acts, they have little effect on the systemic evil that has been incorporated into institutional behavior. Good people seem to be limited by their very goodness. Is there then no hope? Can nothing be done to prevent the triumph of evil?

Some societies have developed benign and civil ways of dealing with it. Gandhi was able to use passive resistance to expel the evil British RAJ from India, but, unfortunately, the Indians were unable to use it to keep an evil local RAJ from acquiring control. Nevertheless, Gandhi demonstrated that passive resistance can work.

The Norwegians during WWII redefined the surname Quisling to mean traitor and thereby vilified Vidkun Quisling who assisted Nazi Germany after it conquered Norway so that he himself could rule. The term was later used to vilify fascist political parties, military and paramilitary forces and other collaborators in occupied Allied countries. If, as some claim, America is becoming a fascist state, "Quisling" can still be used today. Recently, Stephanie Madoff, daughter-in-law of Bernard Madoff, filed court papers asking to change her and her children's last name to Morgan to avoid additional humiliation and harassment. Vilification by associating a person's name with his acts and applying it to others who act likewise is an effective, benign way of attacking evil. In an earlier piece, I suggested that those who advocate war but deliberately avoid serving themselves be called Cheyneys.

The French Resistance, during and after WWII, shaved the heads of women caught consorting with German occupiers. These "shaved-heads" exposed their shame until their hair re-grew, and even later, others rarely forgot who they were. (Some would consider forcefully shaving a person's head a battery which is illegal, but even so, it is a rather harmless battery.)

Primitive societies developed a whole range of benign ways of confronting evil, some of which are still in use today in isolated places. Ostracism, shunning, anathema, and social rejection have been used successfully. Then there are the more modern practices of boycotting and picketing.

But modern technological advances have made even other practices available. Imaginative uses of these tried and proven methods can be very effective.

For instance, most computer literate people are familiar with denial of service attacks used by hackers. A denial of service attack is an attempt to make a computer resource unavailable to its intended users. These attacks are a great nuisance, but often cause no real damage. No good person would recommend using such attacks, but consider the following situation:

People are routinely asked to write their congressmen to influence their voting on specific issues. These letters are usually delivered to Capitol Hill, perhaps causing congressmen some annoyance, but rarely enough to induce much real change. But what if the letters, written in civil language without threats, were sent to the residences of a congressman's parents, siblings, spouse, and children? What if the letters merely asked the recipient's to urge their relatives to consider changing his/her mind? What if thousands of letters were sent to these people? The annoyance would be enormous. If this were done to enough congressmen often enough, perhaps they would consider acting in more responsible ways or perhaps leaving office altogether. Denying miscreants of the convenient use of the proceeds of their actions could be a powerful tool.

This technique can be used against corporate officers and their governing boards, judges who routinely reduce the amounts jurors award plaintiffs, the police who are shown to have acted brutally, Justices of the Supreme Court who issue rulings that cannot be justified by normal readings of the Constitution, in short, anyone acting in an official capacity who has done

a great wrong. Furthermore, the U.S. Postal Service needs the money. The establishment does not expect people to act in such ways; it expects them to use the normal established channels to express their disapproval. But those established channels have long ago been shown to be ineffective.

All that is required to win the battle against evil is to find ways to make the lives of the miscreants miserable. No laws, not violence, not even punishment is needed. Annoy them, shame them, shun them, ostracize them, turn them into social outcasts, personae non gratae. Even if the good in society constitute only a minority, if the minority is large enough, it can succeed using such benign but annoying techniques.

The situation described above is only one of many possibilities. Imaginative people can conceive of others which can be equally effective. Think of ways of using the telephone, twitter, posters, and anything else in similar ways. The governing maxim needed is just make the miscreant's life miserable.

Unless such techniques are put to use, evil will prevail. Then, paraphrasing J. Robert Oppenheimer's comment after the first atomic bomb was successfully tested, We will have become evil, the destroyer of goodness.

John Kozy is a retired professor of philosophy and logic who writes on social, political, and economic issues. After serving in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, he spent 20 years as a university professor and another 20 years working as a writer. He has published a textbook in formal logic commercially, in academic journals and a small number of commercial magazines, and has written a number of guest editorials for newspapers. His on-line pieces can be found on <http://www.jkozy.com/> and he can be emailed from that site's homepage.

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[Rick Rozoff: Middle East Loses Trillions As U.S. Strikes Record Arms Deals](#)

Middle East Loses Trillions As U.S. Strikes Record Arms Deals

by Rick Rozoff [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 2, 2010 | Stop NATO | Global Research

The Internet has provided the world with, if nothing else, instantaneous access to news and in-depth information previously available only to governments and think tanks. It has also allowed for the exchange of data and analyses between groups and individuals around the globe, in part by making one tongue, English, the language of the World Wide Web. It remains to be seen whether the keystroke is mightier than the sword.

An illustrative case in point is an August 29 report from China's Xinhua News Agency on a news article by Egypt's Middle East News Agency regarding a study conducted by the Strategic Foresight Group in India. The latter, a report published in a book entitled The Cost of Conflict in the Middle East, calculates that conflict in the area over the last 20 years has cost the nations and people of the region 12 trillion U.S. dollars.

The Indian report adds that the Middle East has recorded "a high record of military expenses in the past 20 years and is considered the most armed region in the world." [1]

The study was originally released in January of 2009 and was recently translated into Arabic by the Institute for Peace Studies of Egypt. It estimates that in a peaceful environment the nations of the Middle East could have achieved an average annual growth in gross domestic product of 8 percent.

Sundeep Waslekar, president of the Strategic Foresight Group and one of the report's authors, was quoted in January of last year saying of the region's nations, "The choice they have to make is the choice between the danger of devastation and the promise of peace." [2]

An account of the presentation of the report last year added that the cost of conflict in the region is estimated at 2 percent of growth in gross domestic product.

In regards to specific cases, it stated:

"One conclusion is that individuals in most countries are half as rich as they would have been if peace had taken off in 1991.

"Incomes per head in Israel next year would be \$44,241 with peace against a likely \$23,304. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip they would be \$2,427 instead of \$1,220.

"For Iraq, income per head next year is projected at \$2,375, one quarter of the \$9,681 that would have been possible without the conflicts of the past two decades." [3]

Other sources estimate the overall rate of unemployment in the Middle East at 20-25 percent, with joblessness in nations like Lebanon and Yemen at 30 percent or more. This despite the fact that the region has achieved one of the more impressive successes in improving educational opportunities, measured by the amount of years students spend in school, in the world.

The Middle East requires comprehensive regional development, but instead is receiving billions of dollars worth of arms. The area's nations could be spending that sum on rural and urban infrastructure, dams and reservoirs, desalination and irrigation, forestation and fisheries, industry and agriculture, medicine and public health, housing and information technology, equitable integration of cities and villages, and repairing the ravages of past wars rather than on U.S. warplanes, attack helicopters and interceptor missiles.

An American news report of a year ago revealed that, according to a U.S.-based consultancy firm, several Middle Eastern nations are slated to spend over \$100 billion on weapons in the upcoming five years. Most of those arms purchases – "unprecedented packages" – will be by Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and the "core of this arms-buying spree will undoubtedly be the \$20 billion U.S. package of weapons systems over 10 years for the six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council – Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain." The expansion of American arms sales and military presence in the Persian Gulf targets Iran in the first place.

The same feature documented plans for the U.S. to supply Egypt with a \$13 billion arms package and Israel with \$30 billion in weaponry over ten years, the latter "a 25 percent increase over previous levels." [4]

A year later it was disclosed that Washington will sell \$13 billion worth of arms and military equipment to Iraq, "a huge order of tanks, ships and hardware that U.S. officials say shows Iraqi-U.S. military ties will be tight for years to come." A \$3 billion deal for 18 F-16 Fighting Falcon multirole jet fighters is also in the works. Iraq will become one of the largest purchasers of U.S. weapons in the world.

According to the U.S. Army's Lieutenant General Michael Barbero, ranking American officer in charge of training and advising Iraqi troops, such military agreements help "build their capabilities, first and foremost; and second, it builds our strategic relationship for the future." [5]

With 4.7 million Iraqis displaced since 2003, 2.2 million as refugees in Jordan, Syria and other nations, and a near collapse of the nation's civilian infrastructure since the U.S. invasion, surely there are better ways of spending \$16 billion than on American arms.

To Iraq's south, last month the U.S. announced one of the largest weapons sales in its history: A \$60 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia. The Pentagon notified Congress of the colossal transaction which the U.S. legislative body will approve later this month.

Over the next decade Washington will supply Saudi Arabia with F-15SA Strike Eagle jet fighters (SA is for Saudi Advanced), 72 UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, 60 AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters, helicopter-carrying offshore patrol vessels and upgrades for the 96 Patriot Advanced Capability-2 interceptor missiles already stationed in the kingdom.

Last month Kuwait announced that it planned to purchase more than 200 U.S. Patriot anti-ballistic missiles in a \$900 million deal. The U.S. Defense Department also advised Congress of that transaction, stating "Kuwait needs these missiles to meet current and future threats of enemy air-to-ground weapons."

The news agency which reported the above, Agence France-Presse, also provided the following information:

"The U.S. has several military bases in Kuwait, including Camp Arifjan, one of the biggest U.S. military facilities in the region. There are between 15,000 and 20,000 U.S. troops stationed in Kuwait." [6] The American Fifth Fleet is headquartered in neighboring Bahrain.

The U.S. is also providing Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates with Patriot Advanced Capability-3 missile interception batteries.

Last year Washington approved the transfer of a Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) missile shield system to the United Arab Emirates. The deal, estimated to cost \$7 billion, is the first transfer of the advanced interceptor missiles outside the U.S.

In May the Barack Obama administration requested \$205 million from Congress for the Israeli Iron Dome layered interceptor missile shield, in the words of a Pentagon spokesman "the first direct U.S. investment in the Iron Dome system." [7]

In the autumn of 2008 the U.S. opened an interceptor missile radar base in Israel's Negev Desert centered on a Forward-Based X-Band Radar with a range of 2,900 miles.

This August 15 Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak announced his country is to receive – one can't say buy – 20 U.S. F-35 Joint Strike Fighters worth \$96 million apiece along with spare parts, maintenance and simulators. "The \$2.7 billion deal will be paid for using U. S. military assistance." [8] The fifth generation stealth warplanes are the world's most advanced. According to Israeli government sources in reference to the prospect of eventual deployment of Russian air defenses to Iran and Syria, "the purchase of F-35 fighters would effectively eliminate the threat from Russian-made S-300 air defense systems because a series of computer simulations had clearly demonstrated that new U.S. stealth fighters outperform the Russian missiles."

This year the State Department confirmed that \$2.55 billion in U.S. military assistance was given to Israel in 2009 and that the figure will "increase to \$3 billion in 2012, and will total \$3.15 billion a year from 2013 to 2018." [9] That is, will grow by almost 25 percent.

Since the administration of Jimmy Carter and his National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski bought off Anwar Sadat and through him Egypt in 1978 at the expense of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and other Arab states, Washington has provided Cairo with \$1.3 billion a year in military aid, adding up to \$50 billion by 2008.

In January of this year General David Petraeus, then head of U.S. Central Command and now in charge of 150,000 American and NATO troops in Afghanistan, visited Yemen and called for more than doubling military aid to the strife-torn nation from \$70 to \$150 million annually. He was later forced to retract his comments, but the Wall Street Journal reported on September 2 that "The U.S. military's Central Command has proposed pumping as much as \$1.2 billion over five years

into building up Yemen's security forces." The United Nations Statistics Division estimated Yemeni gross national income per capita for 2008 at \$1,260.

The U.S. has launched several missile strikes inside Yemen over the past nine months and "U.S. Special Operations teams...play an expansive role in the country." [10] Funding for what the Pentagon describes as a counterterrorism program in the country has grown from \$5 million a year in fiscal year 2006 to over \$155 million four years later.

Washington is planning to add unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) equipped with lethal missiles operated by the Central Intelligence Agency to its operations in Yemen, replicating the same arrangement in Pakistan.

After the so-called Cedar Revolution in Lebanon in 2005 – modeled after comparable "color revolutions" in the former Soviet states of Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan in 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively – led to the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the country and the installation of pro-Western Fouad Siniora as prime minister, the U.S. reestablished military contacts with Lebanon, which had been broken off after 1983. A dozen U.S. military officials travelled to Beirut at the end of the year, inspecting bases as part of a "comprehensive assessment of the condition of U.S.-made equipment in the Lebanon armed forces." [11]

After the Israeli invasion of the country the following summer, Washington started military aid to the nation of four million people which two years later had exceeded \$410 million. According to an Associated Press account in 2008, "The [George W. Bush] administration has spent about \$1.3 billion in the past two years trying to prop up Siniora's Western-allied government, including about \$400 million in military aid." [12]

On October 6, 2008 the U.S. established a joint military commission with Lebanon "to bolster military cooperation."

The, by Lebanese standards, unprecedented donations of arms and military equipment by the Pentagon were explicitly for internal use – against Hezbollah – and for deployment at the Syrian border. Not for defending the nation against the country that had invaded it in 1978, 1983 and 2006 – Israel.

On August 2 of this year, a day before two Lebanese soldiers were killed in a firefight with Israeli troops on Lebanese territory, Congressman Howard Berman, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, blocked a \$100 million security assistance package to the Lebanese military. There should be no misunderstanding: The Pentagon has not built up the armed forces of post-"Cedar" Lebanon to defend the nation, its people or even the army itself.

The sum blocked by Berman, added to that already provided by the Pentagon, well exceeds half a billion dollars. That amount of money would go a long way in alleviating the suffering of 900,000 Lebanese displaced and in rebuilding some of the 30,000 housing units destroyed by the Israeli military in 2006.

Weapons are the most expensive of manufactured goods and the least productive, generating no value and designed only to destroy and kill. They are not produced solely or primarily to be displayed in parades or at air shows.

The Middle East is that part of the world that has known the least peace in the past 60 years and that is in most need of it. Regional disputes – over land and borders, over water and other resources – need to be resolved in a non-antagonistic manner.

The foreign and national security policies of the region's states need to be demilitarized. Disarmament of both conventional and nuclear forces is imperative.

Washington pouring over \$100 billion in new arms into the Middle East will not contribute to the safety and security of its inhabitants. It will not benefit the nations of the region. In truth not a single one of them.

- 1) Xinhua News Agency, August 29, 2010
- 2) Reuters, January 23, 2009
- 3) Ibid

- 4) United Press International, August 25, 2009
- 5) USA TODAY, August 31, 2010
- 6) Agence France-Press, September 1, 2010
- 7) Reuters, May 13, 2010
- 8) Russian Information Agency Novosti, August 15, 2010
- 9) Reuters, May 13, 2010
- 10) Wall Street Journal, September 2, 2010
- 11) Chicago Tribune, March 2, 2006
- 12) Associated Press, May 14, 2008

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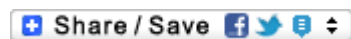
The True Cost of the War

By Paul Craig Roberts [article link](#) [article link](#)

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Ralph Nader: Honoring Those Who Toil

Honoring Those Who Toil

by Ralph Nader [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 3, 2010 | Nader | CommonDreams

What does Labor Day mean anymore other than another day off, another store sale and, in some cities, parades ever smaller and more devoid of passion for elevating the well-being of working people?

Philosopher/mechanic Matthew B. Crawford, in his recent, embracing book, Shop Craft as Soulcraft has a thoughtful consideration. He deflates the high-prestige workplace and makes the case for millions of Americans who still make and fix things with their hands.

"I want to suggest we can take a broader view of what a good job might consist of, and therefore what kind of education is important. We seem to have developed an educational monoculture, tied to a vision of what kind of work is valuable and important - everyone gets herded into a certain track where they end up working in an office, regardless of their natural bents.

But some people, including some who are very smart, would rather be learning to build things or fix things. Why not honor that? I think one reason we don't is that we've had this fantasy that we're going to somehow take leave of material reality and glide around in a pure information economy."

Dr. Crawford has a PhD in political philosophy and is a mechanic who runs Shockoe Moto, an independent motorcycle repair shop in Richmond, Virginia. This gives him a deep sense of skill and broader perspective with which to evaluate these ways of satisfying one's value of locally-rooted work. He contrasts these traits with the deadening assembly line and computer focused office work, both of which can be outsourced on the whims of a boss.

The Winsted, Connecticut Deck's Fix-It Shop, operated joyously by an aunt and her nephew, until they retired last year, would have been exhibit A for Dr. Crawford. They fixed hundreds of different products brought to them by the townspeople. Their small shop was filled horizontally and vertically with items donated, about to be fixed or were unfixable by the manufacturers' design. They could have charged a museum entrance fee for browsing if their shop had more room. Oh, what pride they regularly took in their work.

Electricians, plumbers, carpenters, painters, tailors, car and bike repairers, restorers of stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, furnaces, locks, windows, sidewalks and streets enjoy a special kind of personal job gratification that is alien to the pre-designed, robotic labors of their friends who come home every day with clean clothes.

I've often wondered why the knowledge of tradespeople about the best, middling and worst brands of equipment, products and materials they work with or have to install (such as furnaces) isn't collected by some magazine or consumer group. After all Angie's List is surveying what their customers around the country think about the quality of the service.

Along with the repairers, we should recognize the inspectors-millions of them working for government agencies and companies to assure that health and safety laws are observed and quality controls are maintained. They are the meat and poultry inspectors, OSHA and Customs inspectors, sanitation inspectors of food stores and restaurants, motor vehicle inspectors, nuclear, chemical and aircraft inspectors, inspectors of laboratories, hospitals, clinics, building code inspectors and the insurance inspectors assigned to loss prevention duties.

The more conscientious of these inspectors are vulnerable to being over-ridden by their less committed superiors (such as meat inspectors for the U.S. Department of Agriculture) or harassed (inspectors for the U.S. Forest Service on corporately exploited federal timber land.) Sometimes inspectors so commit their conscience to their work that they become whistle-blowers about safety hazards or hanky panky, which too often invites career-ending retaliation.

How little attention we devote to those inspectors who are sentinels for the well-being of the American people. As a result, the courageous are not honored-if only to motivate the young to choose these careers. Moreover, a culture of corruption, that can erode their alertness or burdens them with weak standards to enforce, escapes exposure.

Then there are the near invisibles-the cleaners who do their thankless but essential jobs in hotels, airports, bus and train stations, office buildings, factories, schools, libraries, museums, streets, restaurants and homes.

Strange how we don't react to cleaners-rarely thanking them or greeting them with salutations. Notice how airline passengers rush past them on the jetway while they wait to clean up the messes under severe time pressure. People who babble incessantly at airports or bus and train stations, while waiting for their departure, ignore the sweepers and dusters, automatically averting their eyes, and almost never acknowledging their work.

Taxi drivers are often tipped and thanked. How many hotel maids, who clean twelve or more soiled rooms and toilets a day, receive any thanks or tips by the guests? Cleaners are among the lowest paid workers, often handle not the safest of chemicals, and receive very little respect or recognition. Their lowly status has to affect their morale and maybe their performance.

Yet what would we do if these workers went on a general strike from the nursing homes to the garbage trucks? We'd feel it a lot more than if the overpaid Wall Street traders went on strike.

One day I was at BWI airport and went to the crowded men's room. As I entered, the elderly cleaning man erupted in frustration. "I'm sick of this job," he shouted to no one in particular. "Hour after hour I clean up, come back, see the crap, clean up some more. It never ends," he wailed. The men who were wiping, flushing, washing, drying and zipping were stunned and silently shuffled out, as if he wasn't there. I thanked him for his work and candor, calmed him down and gave him a gratuity. The others looked at me blankly as if I was dealing with a ghost they never see as a human being.

Cultures can be astonishing. The hands-on workers who harvest our food, clean up after us, repair our property, look out after our health and safety conditions and serve as nannies to our children receive few honors, status or anywhere near the compensation of those who gamble with our money, entertain us or drive us into wars they don't fight themselves.

Shouldn't Labor Day be a time to gather and contemplate such inverted values and celebrate those who toil without proper recognition?

[Ralph Nader](#) is a consumer advocate, lawyer, and author. His most recent book - and first novel - is, [Only The Super-Rich Can Save Us](#). His most recent work of non-fiction is [The Seventeen Traditions](#).

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Thursday, September 2, 2010

[Paul Craig Roberts: Death By Globalism](#)

Death By Globalism

Economists haven't a clue

By Paul Craig Roberts [article link](#) [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 01, 2010 | Information Clearing House | Global Research | Silver Bear Cafe

Have economists made themselves irrelevant? If you have any doubts, have a look at the current issue of the magazine, [International Economy](#), a slick endorsed by former Federal Reserve chairmen Paul Volcker and Alan Greenspan, by Jean-Claude Trichet, president of the European Central Bank, by former Secretary of State George Shultz, and by the New York Times and Washington Post, both of which declare the magazine to be "ahead of the curve."

The main feature of the current issue is "The Great Stimulus Debate ([pdf](#))."

Is the Obama fiscal stimulus helping the economy or hindering it?

Princeton economics professor and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman and Moody's Analytics chief economist Mark Zandi represent the Keynesian view that government deficit spending is needed to lift the economy out of recession. Zandi declares that thanks to the fiscal stimulus, "The economy has made enormous progress since early 2009," an opinion shared by the President's Council of Economic Advisors and the Congressional Budget Office.

The opposite view, associated with Harvard economics professor Robert Barro and with European economists, such as Francesco Giavazzi and Marco Pagano and the European Central Bank, is that government budget surpluses achieved by cutting government spending spur the economy by reducing the ratio of debt to Gross Domestic Product. This is the "let them eat cake school of economics."

Barro says that fiscal stimulus has no effect, because people anticipate the future tax increases implied by government deficits and increase their personal savings to offset the added government debt. Giavazzi and Pagano reason that since fiscal stimulus does not expand the economy, fiscal austerity consisting of higher taxes and reduced government spending could be the cure for unemployment.

If one overlooks the real world and the need of life for sustenance, one can become engrossed in this debate. However, the minute one looks out the window upon the world, one realizes that cutting Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, and housing subsidies when 15 million Americans have lost jobs, medical coverage, and homes is a certain path to death by starvation, curable diseases, and exposure, and the loss of the productive labor inputs from 15 million people.

Although some proponents of this anti-Keynesian policy deny that it results in social upheaval, Gerald Celente's observation is closer to the mark: "When people have nothing left to lose, they lose it."

The Krugman Keynesian school is just as deluded. Neither side in "The Great Stimulus Debate" has a clue that the problem for the U.S. is that a large chunk of U.S. GDP and the jobs, incomes, and careers associated with it, have been moved offshore and given to Chinese, Indians, and others with low wage rates. Profits have soared on Wall Street, while job prospects for the middle class have been eliminated.

The offshoring of American jobs resulted from (1) Wall Street pressures for "higher shareholder returns," that is, for more profits, and from (2) no-think economists, such as the ones engaged in the debate over fiscal stimulus, who mistakenly associated globalism with free trade instead of with its antithesis--the pursuit of lowest factor cost abroad or absolute advantage, the opposite of comparative advantage, which is the basis for free trade theory. Even Krugman, who has some credentials as a trade theorist has fallen for the equation of globalism with free trade.

As economists assume, incorrectly according to the latest trade theory by Ralph Gomory and William Baumol, that free trade is always mutually beneficial, economists have failed to examine the devastatingly harmful effects of offshoring. The more intelligent among them who point it out are dismissed as "protectionists."

The reason fiscal stimulus cannot rescue the U.S. economy has nothing to do with the difference between Barro and Krugman. It has to do with the fact that a large percentage of high-productivity, high-value-added jobs and the middle class incomes and careers associated with them have been given to foreigners. What used to be U.S. GDP is now Chinese, Indian, and other country GDP.

When the jobs have been shipped overseas, fiscal stimulus does not call workers back to work in order to meet the rising consumer demand. If fiscal stimulus has any effect, it stimulates employment in China and India.

The "let them eat cake school" is equally off the mark. As investment, research, development, etc., have been moved offshore, cutting entitlements simply drives the domestic population deeper in the ground. Americans cannot pay their mortgages, car payments, tuition, utility bills, or for that matter, any bill, based on Chinese and Indian pay scales. Therefore, Americans are priced out of the labor market and become dependencies of the federal budget. "Fiscal consolidation" means writing off large numbers of humans.

During the Great Depression, many wage and salary earners were new members of the labor force arriving from family farms, where many parents and grandparents still supported themselves. When their city jobs disappeared, many could return to the farm.

Today farming is in the hands of agri-business. There are no farms to which the unemployed can return.

The "let them eat cake school" never mentions the one point in its favor. The U.S., with all its huffed up power and importance, depends on the U.S. dollar as reserve currency. It is this role of the dollar that allows America to pay for its imports in its own currency.

For a country whose trade is as unbalanced as America's, this privilege is what keeps the country afloat.

The threats to the dollar's role are the budget and trade deficits. Both are so large and have accumulated for so long that the prospect of making good on them has evaporated. As I have written for a number of years, the U.S. is so dependent on the dollar as reserve currency that it must have as its main policy goal to preserve that role.

Otherwise, the U.S., an import-dependent country, will be unable to pay for its excess of imports over its exports.

“Fiscal consolidation,” the new term for austerity, could save the dollar. However, unless starvation, homelessness and social upheaval are the goals, the austerity must fall on the military budget. America cannot afford its multi-trillion dollar wars that serve only to enrich those invested in the armaments industries. The U.S. cannot afford the neoconservative dream of world hegemony and a conquered Middle East open to Israeli colonization.

Is anyone surprised that not a single proponent of the “let them eat cake school” mentions cutting military spending? Entitlements, despite the fact that they are paid for by earmarked taxes and have been in surplus since the Reagan administration, are always what economists put on the chopping bloc.

Where do the two schools stand on inflation vs. deflation? We don’t have to worry. Martin Feldstein, one of America’s pre-eminent economist says: “The good news is that investors should worry about neither.” His explanation epitomizes the insouciance of American economists.

Feldstein says that there cannot be inflation because of the high rate of unemployment and the low rate of capacity utilization. Thus, “there is little upward pressure on wages and prices in the United States.” Moreover, “the recent rise in the value of the dollar relative to the euro and British pound helps by reducing import costs.”

As for deflation, no risk there either. The huge deficits prevent deflation, “so the good news is that the possibility of significant inflation or deflation during the next few years is low on the list of economic risks faced by the U.S. economy and by financial investors.”

What we have in front of us is an unaware economics profession. There may be some initial period of deflation as stock and housing prices decline with the economy, which is headed down and not up. The deflation will be short lived, because as the government’s deficit rises with the declining economy, the prospect of financing a \$2 trillion annual deficit evaporates once individual investors have completed their flight from the stock market into “safe” government bonds, once the hyped Greek, Spanish, and Irish crises have driven investors out of euros into dollars, and once the banks’ excess reserves created by the bailout have been used up in the purchase of Treasuries.

Then what finances the deficit? Don’t look for an answer from either side of The Great Stimulus Debate. They haven’t a clue despite the fact that the answer is obvious.

The Federal Reserve will monetize the federal government deficit. The result will be high inflation, possibly hyper-inflation and high unemployment simultaneously.

The no-think economics establishment has no policy response for economic armageddon, assuming they are even capable of recognizing it.

Economists who have spent their professional lives rationalizing “globalism” as good for America have no idea of the disaster that they have wrought.

Hon. Paul Craig Roberts is the John M. Olin Fellow at the Institute for Political Economy, Senior Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and Research Fellow at the Independent Institute. A former editor and columnist for The Wall Street Journal and columnist for Business Week and the Scripps Howard News Service, he is a nationally syndicated columnist for Creators Syndicate in Los Angeles and a columnist for Investor’s Business Daily. In 1992 he received the Warren Brookes Award for Excellence in Journalism. In 1993 the Forbes Media Guide ranked him as one of the top seven journalists.

He was Distinguished Fellow at the Cato Institute from 1993 to 1996. From 1982 through 1993, he held the William E. Simon Chair in Political Economy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. During 1981-82 he served as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy. President Reagan and Treasury Secretary Regan credited him with a major role in the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, and he was awarded the Treasury Department’s Meritorious Service Award for “his outstanding contributions to the formulation of United States economic policy.” From 1975 to 1978,

Dr. Roberts served on the congressional staff where he drafted the Kemp-Roth bill and played a leading role in developing bipartisan support for a supply-side economic policy.

In 1987 the French government recognized him as "the artisan of a renewal in economic science and policy after half a century of state interventionism" and inducted him into the Legion of Honor.

Dr. Roberts' latest books are *The Tyranny of Good Intentions*, co-authored with IPE Fellow Lawrence Stratton, and published by Prima Publishing in May 2000, and *Chile: Two Visions - The Allende-Pinochet Era*, co-authored with IPE Fellow Karen Araujo, and published in Spanish by Universidad Nacional Andres Bello in Santiago, Chile, in November 2000. *The Capitalist Revolution in Latin America*, co-authored with IPE Fellow Karen LaFollette Araujo, was published by Oxford University Press in 1997. A Spanish language edition was published by Oxford in 1999. *The New Colorline: How Quotas and Privilege Destroy Democracy*, co-authored with Lawrence Stratton, was published by Regnery in 1995. A paperback edition was published in 1997. *Meltdown: Inside the Soviet Economy*, co-authored with Karen LaFollette, was published by the Cato Institute in 1990. Harvard University Press published his book, *The Supply-Side Revolution*, in 1984. Widely reviewed and favorably received, the book was praised by *Forbes* as "a timely masterpiece that will have real impact on economic thinking in the years ahead." Dr. Roberts is the author of *Alienation and the Soviet Economy*, published in 1971 and republished in 1990. He is the author of *Marx's Theory of Exchange, Alienation and Crisis*, published in 1973 and republished in 1983. A Spanish language edition was published in 1974.

Dr. Roberts has held numerous academic appointments. He has contributed chapters to numerous books and has published many articles in journals of scholarship, including the *Journal of Political Economy*, *Oxford Economic Papers*, *Journal of Law and Economics*, *Studies in Banking and Finance*, *Journal of Monetary Economics*, *Public Finance Quarterly*, *Public Choice*, *Classica et Mediaevalia*, *Ethics*, *Slavic Review*, *Soviet Studies*, *Rivista de Political Economica*, and *Zeitschrift fur Wirtschaftspolitik*. He has entries in the McGraw-Hill *Encyclopedia of Economics* and the *New Palgrave Dictionary of Money and Finance*. He has contributed to *Commentary*, *The Public Interest*, *The National Interest*, *Harper's*, the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Fortune*, *London Times*, *The Financial Times*, *TLS*, *The Spectator*, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, *Le Figaro*, *Liberation*, and the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. He has testified before committees of Congress on 30 occasions.

Dr. Roberts was educated at the Georgia Institute of Technology (B.S.), the University of Virginia (Ph.D.), the University of California at Berkeley and Oxford University where he was a member of Merton College.

He is listed in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in the World*, *The Dictionary of International Biography*, *Outstanding People of the Twentieth Century*, and *1000 Leaders of World Influence*. His latest book, [HOW THE ECONOMY WAS LOST](#), has just been published by CounterPunch/AK Press. He can be reached at: PaulCraigRoberts@yahoo.com

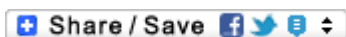
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John Pilger: Flying the Flag, Faking the News

Flying the Flag, Faking the News

Loud noises from Washington about a US pull-out from Iraq are a poor disguise for America's determination to keep waging war. And the same sort of spin is at work in Britain

by John Pilger [article link](#) [article link](#)

September 2, 2010 | The New Statesman | CommonDreams

Edward Bernays, the American nephew of Sigmund Freud, is said to have invented modern propaganda. During the First World War, he was one of a group of influential liberals who mounted a secret government campaign to persuade reluctant Americans to send an army to the bloodbath in Europe. In his book *Propaganda*, published in 1928, Bernays wrote that the "intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society", and that the manipulators "constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power in our country". Instead of propaganda, he coined the euphemism "public relations".

The American tobacco industry hired Bernays to convince women that they should smoke in public. By associating smoking with women's liberation, he made cigarettes "torches of freedom". In 1954, he conjured a communist menace in Guatemala as an excuse for overthrowing the democratically elected government, whose social reforms were threatening the United Fruit Company's monopoly of the banana trade. He called it a "liberation".

Bernays was no rabid right-winger. He was an elitist liberal who believed that "engineering public consent" was for the greater good. This could be achieved by the creation of "false realities" which then became "news events". Here are examples of how it is done these days.

False reality The last US combat troops have left Iraq "as promised, on schedule", according to President Barack Obama. The TV news has been filled with cinematic images of the "last US soldiers", silhouetted against the dawn light, crossing the border into Kuwait.

Fact They have not left. At least 50,000 troops will continue to operate from 94 bases. American air assaults are unchanged, as are special forces' assassinations. The number of "military contractors" is 100,000 and rising. Most Iraqi oil is now under direct foreign control.

False reality BBC presenters have described the departing US troops as a "sort of victorious army" that has achieved "a remarkable change in [Iraq's] fortunes". Their commander, General David Petraeus, is a "celebrity", "charming", "savvy" and "remarkable".

Fact There is no victory of any sort. There is a catastrophic disaster, and attempts to present it as otherwise are a model of Bernays's campaign to "rebrand" the slaughter of the First World War as "necessary" and "noble". In 1980, Ronald Reagan, running for president, rebranded the invasion of Vietnam, in which up to three million people died, as a "noble cause", a theme taken up enthusiastically by Hollywood. Today's Iraq war movies have a similar purging theme: the invader as both idealist and victim.

False reality It is not known how many Iraqis have died. They are "countless", or maybe "in the tens of thousands".

Fact As a direct consequence of the Anglo-American-led invasion, a million Iraqis have died. This figure, from Opinion Research Business, follows peer-reviewed research by Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC, whose methods were secretly affirmed as "best practice" and "robust" by the Blair government's chief scientific adviser. This is rarely reported or presented to "charming" American generals. Neither is the dispossession of four million Iraqis, the malnourishment of most Iraqi children, the epidemic of mental illness, or the poisoning of the environment.

False reality The British economy has a deficit of billions which must be reduced with cuts in public services and regressive taxation, in a spirit of "we're all in this together".

Fact We are not in this together. What is remarkable about this PR triumph is that only 18 months ago, the diametric opposite filled TV screens and front pages. Then, in a state of shock, truth became unavoidable, if briefly. The Wall Street and City of London trough was on full view for the first time, along with the venality of once-celebrated snouts. Billions in public money went to inept and crooked organisations known as banks, which were spared debt liability by their Labour government sponsors.

Within a year, record profits and personal bonuses were posted and the "black hole" was no longer the responsibility of the banks, whose debt is to be paid by those not in any way responsible: the public. The received media wisdom of this "necessity" is now a chorus, from the BBC to the Sun. A masterstroke, Bernays would surely say.

False reality Ed Miliband offers a "genuine alternative" as leader of the Labour Party.

Fact Miliband, like his brother and almost all those standing for the Labour leadership, is immersed in the effluent of New Labour. As a New Labour MP and minister, he did not refuse to serve under Blair or to speak out against Labour's persistent warmongering. He now calls the invasion of Iraq a "profound mistake". Calling it a mistake insults the memory and the dead. It was a crime, of which the evidence is voluminous. He has nothing new to say about the other colonial wars, none of them mistakes. Neither has he demanded basic social justice - that those who caused the recession clear up the mess and that Britain's fabulously rich corporate minority be taxed seriously, starting with Rupert Murdoch.

The good news is that false realities often fail when the public trusts its own critical intelligence. Two classified documents recently released by WikiLeaks express the CIA's concern that the populations of European countries, which oppose their governments' war policies, are not succumbing to the usual propaganda spun through the media.

For the rulers of the world, this is a conundrum, because their unaccountable power rests on the false reality that no popular resistance works. And it does.

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John Pilger was born and educated in Sydney, Australia. He has been a war correspondent, film-maker and playwright. Based in London, he has written from many countries and has twice won British journalism's highest award, that of "Journalist of the Year," for his work in Vietnam and Cambodia.

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And We'll Need Another One to Really Bring Our Foreign Wars to an End

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Wednesday, September 1, 2010

Collins/Pizzigati: The August Day Plutocracy Would Love Us to Forget

The August Day Plutocracy Would Love Us to Forget

Today marks the 100th anniversary of the most 'radical speech' an American ex-President has ever delivered.

by Chuck Collins and Sam Pizzigati [article link](#)

August 31, 2010 | CommonDreams

Ex-Presidents almost always follow a small number of well-worn scripts. Some rush to cash in on their celebrity. Some do charitable good deeds. Some just lie low.

Exactly one century ago, on August 31, 1910, we had an ex-President who took a brash and bold leap that took him far beyond these narrowly circumscribed roles. On that day, in the middle of Middle America, a former President — Theodore Roosevelt — essentially called on his fellow citizens to smash the nation's rich down to democratic size.

We need, Roosevelt told a massive assembly of 30,000 listeners, to "destroy privilege." Ruin for our democracy, he warned, will be "inevitable if our national life brings us nothing better than swollen fortunes for the few."

Those listeners — in Osawatimie, Kansas — roared their approval. Back East, apologists for grand fortune would be aghast. Editorial writers would label Roosevelt "frankly socialistic," even "anarchistic." A later historian, George Mowry, would call TR's talk, soon to be known as his "New Nationalism" address, "the most radical speech ever given by an ex-President."

Time hasn't dimmed that radicalism. Indeed, TR's speech speaks powerfully to us today, mainly because we confront, a hundred years after he spoke in Osawatimie, the same concentrated wealth and power that TR so feared.

As President, between 1901 and early 1909, Roosevelt had taken on a plutocracy just as entrenched as ours today. He won some battles and ducked many others. But he left the White House feeling the nation, under his successor William Howard Taft, would be headed in the right direction.

But Taft disappointed Roosevelt and outraged the progressive wing of Roosevelt's Republican Party. TR saw a burning need to spell out a clearer vision for his nation's future, and he jumped at the invitation from Osawatimie to help dedicate the historic small city's John Brown Memorial Park.

The event quickly figured to be the biggest in Kansas political history. Roosevelt had just finished a triumphal global tour. He ranked, observers agreed, as the "world's most popular citizen."

Kansans would pull out all the stops to set the stage for a memorable speech. By the appointed day, Osawatimie had never looked better. Bands and dignitaries would be everywhere.

“We are ready for plutocrat and peasant,” wrote one local editor, “to honor the ground where John Brown made his decisive stand for freedom.”

Plutocrats never did show. But average Kansans did. They started coming the day before TR’s scheduled appearance, in a driving rain, via “foot, bicycles, motors, buggies, wagons, trains.”

The rain, fortunately, would stop before the mud became too deep. Roosevelt would have open skies when he stepped up onto his podium, a kitchen table, to begin his address. The “surging throng,” says historian Robert La Forte, “continually cheered” for the next hour and a half.

Most Americans today would cheer, too. Are you outraged by the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico? Our national resources, Roosevelt pronounced, “must be used for the benefit of all our people, and not monopolized for the benefit of the few.”

Think corporations wield too much clout?

“The Constitution guarantees protections to property, and we must make that promise good,” Roosevelt noted. “But it does not give the right of suffrage to any corporation.”

We must “prohibit the use of corporate funds directly or indirectly for political purposes,” TR enunciated, and hold corporate officials “personally responsible when any corporation breaks the law.”

Again and again, Roosevelt urged his listeners to demand state “and, especially, national, restraint upon unfair money-getting.” The absence of that restraint, he noted, “has tended to create a small class of enormously wealthy and economically powerful men, whose chief object is to hold and increase their power.”

But TR didn’t stop there. Restraining fortunes based on “unfair money-getting” had to be only a first step. A fortune “gained without doing damage to the community,” he added, deserves no praise. Americans needed to set a higher standard. We should permit fortunes “to be gained only so long as the gaining represents benefit to the community.”

And even those fortunes, Roosevelt added, needed to be checked, because the “really big fortune, the swollen fortune, by the mere fact of its size acquires qualities” that “differentiate it in kind as well as in degree from what is possessed by men of relatively small means,” qualities that help ensure the “political domination of money.”

To check the growth and limit the power of these fortunes, Roosevelt called for a progressive income tax and an “inheritance tax on big fortunes, properly safeguarded against evasion and increasing rapidly in amount with the sizes of the estate.”

Three years after TR’s Osawatimie speech, we would have an income tax in the United States. Six years later after Osawatimie, we would have an estate tax. By the middle of the 20th century, many of the corporate regulatory reforms that Roosevelt demanded on that August day a century ago would be the law of the land.

By that mid century, the plutocracy that Roosevelt decried had essentially disappeared. The United States had become a middle class nation where average workers, as TR envisioned in 1910, had “a wage more than sufficient to cover the bare cost of living, and hours of labor short enough” to leave them “time and energy” to bear their “share in the management of the community.”

Now that mid 20th century middle class has disappeared. We live amid plutocracy once again. In fact, 2010 marks the first year since 1916 that we don’t even have an estate tax on the books. The heirs of the super rich can this year inherit billions in inheritance totally tax-free.

A hundred years ago, Theodore Roosevelt refused to accept these sorts of concentrations of enormous wealth. At Osawatimie, he helped inspire a generation-long struggle to break up these concentrations. That struggle succeeded.

Our struggle has only just begun. We can succeed, too.

Chuck Collins, a senior scholar at the [Institute for Policy Studies](#), is the co-author, with Bill Gates Sr. of [Wealth and Our Commonwealth: Why America Should Tax Accumulated Fortunes](#). **Sam Pizzigati**, an Institute associate fellow, edits [Too Much](#), an online weekly on excess and inequality.

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Norman Solomon: A Speech for Endless War

A Speech for Endless War

by Norman Solomon [article link](#)

September 1, 2010 | CommonDreams

On the last night of August, the president used an Oval Office speech to boost a policy of perpetual war. Hours later, the New York Times front page offered a credulous gloss for the end of "the seven-year American combat mission in Iraq." The first sentence of the coverage described the speech as saying "that it is now time to turn to pressing problems at home." The story went on to assert that Obama "used the moment to emphasize that he sees his primary job as addressing the weak economy and other domestic issues -- and to make clear that he intends to begin disengaging from the war in Afghanistan next summer."

But the speech gave no real indication of a shift in priorities from making war to creating jobs. And the oratory "made clear" only the repetition of vague vows to "begin" disengaging from the Afghanistan war next summer. In fact, top administration officials have been signaling that only token military withdrawals are apt to occur in mid-2011, and Obama said nothing to the contrary.

While now trumpeting the nobility of an Iraq war effort that he'd initially disparaged as "dumb," Barack Obama is polishing a halo over the Afghanistan war, which he touts as very smart. In the process, the Oval Office speech declared that every U.S. war -- no matter how mendacious or horrific -- is worthy of veneration.

Obama closed the speech with a tribute to "an unbroken line of heroes" stretching "from Khe Sanh to Kandahar -- Americans who have fought to see that the lives of our children are better than our own." His reference to the famous U.S. military outpost in South Vietnam was a chilling expression of affinity for another march of folly.

With his commitment to war in Afghanistan, President Obama is not only on the wrong side of history. He is also now propagating an exculpatory view of any and all U.S. war efforts -- as if the immoral can become the magnificent by virtue of patriotic alchemy.

A century ago, William Dean Howells wrote: "What a thing it is to have a country that can't be wrong, but if it is, is right, anyway!"

During the presidency of George W. Bush, "the war on terror" served as a rationale for establishing warfare as a perennial necessity. The Obama administration may have shelved the phrase, but the basic underlying rationales are firmly in place. With American troop levels in Afghanistan near 100,000, top U.S. officials are ramping up rhetoric about "taking the fight to" the evildoers.

The day before the Oval Office speech, presidential spokesman Robert Gibbs talked to reporters about "what this drawdown means to our national security efforts in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia and around the world as we take the fight to Al Qaeda."

The next morning, Obama declared at Fort Bliss: "A lot of families are now being touched in Afghanistan. We've seen casualties go up because we're taking the fight to Al Qaeda and the Taliban and their allies." And, for good measure, Obama added that "now, under the command of General Petraeus, we have the troops who are there in a position to start taking the fight to the terrorists."

If, nine years after 9/11, we are supposed to believe that U.S. forces can now "start" taking the fight to "the terrorists," this is truly war without end. And that's the idea.

Nearly eight years ago, in November 2002, retired U.S. Army Gen. William Odom appeared on C-SPAN's "Washington Journal" program and told viewers: "Terrorism is not an enemy. It cannot be defeated. It's a tactic. It's about as sensible to say we declare war on night attacks and expect we're going to win that war. We're not going to win the war on terrorism."

With his Aug. 31 speech, Obama became explicit about the relationship between reduced troop levels in Iraq and escalation in Afghanistan. "We will disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda, while preventing Afghanistan from again serving as a base for terrorists," he said. "And because of our drawdown in Iraq, we are now able to apply the resources necessary to go on offense." This is the approach of endless war.

While Obama was declaring that "our most urgent task is to restore our economy and put the millions of Americans who have lost their jobs back to work," I went to a National Priorities Project webpage and looked at [cost-of-war counters](#) spinning like odometers in manic overdrive. The figures for the "Cost of War in Afghanistan" -- already above \$329 billion -- are now spinning much faster than the ones for war in Iraq.

One day in March 1969, a Nobel Prize-winning biologist spoke at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "Our government has become preoccupied with death," George Wald said, "with the business of killing and being killed." More than four decades later, how much has really changed?

Norman Solomon is a journalist, historian, and progressive activist. His book "[War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death](#)" has been adapted into a documentary film of the same name. His most recent book is "[Made Love, Got War](#)." He is a national co-chair of the [Healthcare NOT Warfare](#) campaign. In California, he is co-chair of the Commission on a [Green New Deal for the North Bay](#).

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Monday, August 30, 2010

Bill Van Auken: Glenn Beck In Washington: Preaching The Gospel Of Mammon And Militarism

Glenn Beck In Washington: Preaching The Gospel Of Mammon And Militarism

By Bill Van Auken [article link](#) [article link](#)

30 August, 2010 | WSWW | CounterCurrents

The Washington rally organized by right-wing Fox News TV personality [Glenn Beck](#) on Saturday offered a twisted mix of religion, potted history and the glorification of the military under the banner of “restoring honor” to the USA.

Crowd estimates for the rally varied wildly. Beck and his supporters claimed over half a million. Most media outlets put the figure at “tens of thousands” or approximately 100,000. CBS News provided a more precise figure, relying on a company that performed analysis of aerial photographs to produce a figure of 87,000.

Whatever the real number, this amorphous event received immense promotion and coverage, not only by Beck’s own employer, Rupert Murdoch’s Fox News, but by every section of the media. This treatment stood in stark contrast to the media’s virtual blackout of far larger demonstrations held in recent years against the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Beck, who has described himself as a “rodeo clown” and entertainer, while using his television and radio programs to promote right-wing conspiracy theories, reinvented himself for Saturday’s appearance at the Lincoln Memorial. He came before the crowd as the nation’s preacher-in-chief, promoting a gospel of Mammon, Americanism and militarism that reflects the very direct interests of the powerful financial figures who have turned the former drug addict into a multi-millionaire.

The word “Obama” did not cross Beck’s lips. Instead, he advanced the themes of “Faith, Hope and Charity.”

Perhaps the most outrageous pretense of the event was that it somehow had “reclaimed the civil rights movement,” by presenting the idiotic and reactionary rant of Beck on the same site and 47 years to the day that Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his “I have a dream” speech. [[video link](#)]

Beck and his fellow right-winger, former Alaska governor and Republican candidate for vice president in 2008, Sarah Palin, repeatedly invoked King’s legacy, while giant jumbotrons carried King’s image and snippets of the words he spoke in August 1963.

In the months leading up to the event, Beck used his radio and television broadcasts to suggest that the American right was somehow the legitimate heir of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, insinuating that it had arisen to counter similar adversities and oppression. One might suspect from such cynical rhetoric that supporters of the “Tea Party” and Beck’s viewers were being lynched, beaten, jailed and assassinated in various parts of the country.

The association of King with a rally glorifying militarism was perhaps the greatest obscenity. “What is it that America still believes in?” Beck asked in his opening remarks. “Our military.”

A year before his assassination, King denounced the Vietnam war, accusing Washington, in terms that are fully applicable to the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, of fighting “on the side of the wealthy and the secure while we create hell for the poor.”

While Beck hailed King and the civil rights movement Saturday as “people of faith” who merely believed that “everybody deserves a shot,” earlier this year he used one of his broadcasts to denounce King as a “radical socialist” and question why a national holiday had been proclaimed in his honor.

The day after the rally, Beck dismissed the demands raised at the 1963 march on Washington for jobs and decent housing as “racial politics” and said that the civil rights movement’s economic agenda was “a part of it that I don’t agree with.”

In crafting his speech, Beck and his handlers appeared to be guided by the famous axiom of P.T. Barnum that “nobody ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American people.” It was a rambling invocation of God and country that included a full-length recitation of the Gettysburg Address, selective quotations from the Declaration of Independence, the invocation of every hackneyed cliché of Americana and liberal doses of both the New and Old Testaments.

Palin had even less to say, presenting herself as the mother of a “combat vet” and leading the crowd in the chant of “USA, USA, USA.”

While right-wing populist movements in America have a long history of wrapping themselves in the flag and the bible, they have also tended to advance definite economic and social policies that at least invoked the interests of the common man. Those influenced by the Christian revivalism of the 1870s and 1880s railed against monopolies and Mammon. Father Charles Coughlin in the 1930s denounced capitalism and mixed a poisonous brew of anti-Semitism with calls for inflationary monetary policies, a guaranteed annual wage and limited nationalizations.

The fascist huckster Gerald L. K. Smith would have no doubt appreciated Beck’s performance. “Religion and patriotism, keep going on that,” he confided in the 1930s. “It’s the only way you can get them really ‘het up.’” But he put forward demands that included limits on the income of the rich and universal old-age pensions.

In his speech Saturday, Beck offered precisely nothing in terms of proposals. His most concrete advice was to tell people they should pray on their knees and leave their doors open so that their children can see them doing so.

When he first announced his planned Washington rally, Beck had promised he would use it to present “The Plan,” which he promised would provide “specific policies, principles and, most importantly, action steps” to found “a new national movement to restore our great country.”

During his speech Saturday, he attributed his decision to do no such thing to what he described as a conversation he had had with God. One could be forgiven for believing that rather than the divine word of God, Beck was responding to instructions from his more temporal lords: Murdoch, the right-wing Scaife family foundation and the other billionaires and corporate entities that bankroll FreedomWorks and the so-called Tea Party movement that played the principal role in organizing the rally.

Instead of policies, principles and action steps, Beck offered reactionary bromides, telling the crowd, “The poorest among us are still some of the richest in the world... and yet we don’t recognize it.”

“We all must realize how nice we have it here, in spite of our problems,” added Beck, who resides in a \$4.5 million dollar mansion in New Canaan, Connecticut. He counseled the crowd that “charity begins at home first.”

With 26 million American workers on the unemployment lines or unable to find a full-time job, millions more having lost their homes, and working people faced with relentless wage-cutting while Wall Street reels in record profits, such complacent clap trap will find no support from the vast majority of the population. If Beck were to advance an explicit political program based on the interests and aims of the financial aristocracy for whom he speaks, the hostility and opposition would be overwhelming.

Behind Beck’s fuzzy rhetoric about individualism and patriotism there does lie a program which these wealthy, right-wing layers support. It includes the systematic dismantling of all forms of social spending that constitute a drain on profit, including Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. It envisions the reduction of wages in the US to a level that would be competitive with those in China. And it seeks the even greater strengthening of the police-military powers of the government to suppress all opposition from the working class at home and to escalate militarist interventions abroad.

Beck and his backers wisely chose to keep this “plan” under wraps. They recognize that the self-described clown is hardly the man, and the amorphous and politically confused layers attracted to the Tea Party are not the movement to implement such a fascist program.

They lack a mass base for such politics in the US today. The real danger arises from the political subordination of the working class to the Democratic Party and the ruling elite that it serves. Those so-called liberals and “lefts” who promote illusions in Obama bear responsibility for this subordination, which impedes the emergence of a genuine alternative to the policies pursued by both big business parties and allows demagogues on the right to exploit the crisis for their own purposes.

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Billionaire Who Denies Connection to Tea Parties Bankrolls Tea-Partying Glenn Beck Fans

[David Koch](#), billionaire backer of the Tea Party movement, says he's never been to a Tea Party event. So, what do you call the conference full of Tea Partiers he just convened?

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Glenn Beck Has a Long History of Racial Mockery on the Radio -- His Civil Rights Talk Is Pure Fraud

Despite his lame efforts to try to capitalize on the MLK legacy at an upcoming DC rally, Glenn Beck cannot hide his deep-seated racism.

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Saturday, August 28, 2010

[Richard Rubenstein: 5 Ways We Should Radically Reconsider War](#)

5 Ways We Should Radically Reconsider War

By Richard Rubenstein [article link](#)

August 27, 2010 | AlterNet | Bloomsbury Press

Editor's note: The following is an excerpt from Richard Rubenstein's new book, [Reasons To Kill: Why Americans Choose War](#), with the permission of Bloomsbury Press. The book will be available September 2010.

#1 Refuse to Accept the Normality of War

At the end of the nineteenth century, when the United States first became a global power, the arguments for occupying other nations or bringing them under our control featured assertions of moral and racial superiority -- an American version of Kipling's "white man's burden." Later, most justifications for war were based on the need to defend cherished democratic values and institutions against Evil Enemies bent on world conquest. But America's emergence as the world's sole superpower has produced an additional rationale for intervention: our alleged right and duty to save a world of failed and failing states from political chaos and terrorism. As one conservative spokesman put it, "Like it or not, we are the sheriff of the world."

Embraced by many liberals and centrists as well, this "law and order" rationale aims to legitimize the continuous military intervention represented by the War on Terrorism. Accepting it reduces publicity about specific conflicts, accustoms people to tolerate undeclared wars, and redefines "normal" military activity. At the same time, however, the expansion of what Dexter Filkins calls the "forever war" to new theaters generates objections both practical and moral, driving a majority of Americans to demand the early withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, and to oppose new military adventures of this sort in places like Yemen and Somalia.

In all this, one senses a growing understanding that the costs of empire far outweigh the benefits. To position the United States as a global sheriff or superhero actually incites further violence rather than deterring it. The technologically advanced superpower has all the weapons one can dream of, but its rebellious subjects even the score by combining fanatical determination with the ability to use simple weapons against overly complex systems. One might call this the imperial superpower's "Kryptonite problem." To overcome it requires taking off the hero's costume and asking two Clark Kent-like questions:

- What about conflict resolution? Those who resort to violence generally do so because of unsolved problems and unfulfilled human needs, not just out of sheer fanaticism, malice, or power-lust. By giving up the struggle to maintain our superpower status -- an addiction all the more powerful for being largely unconscious -- we free ourselves to assist people to identify their problems and work them out in their own way.

- What about international or regional law enforcement? If conflict resolution doesn't work, what the world requires is a legitimate source of coercion -- a lawful authority people can accept regardless of their socioeconomic status, political views, religion, or culture. This means new institutions, especially on the regional level, that can be designed and brought into existence relatively quickly, if only we permit people to organize and act free of our control.

2 Think Calmly And Strategically About Self-Defense

Almost a decade after the 9/11 attacks, American thinking on self-defense remains fixated on that great trauma. The consciousness that we were subjected to a totally unexpected, bloody assault, and that members of the same organization that attacked us are still at large, has given us the same mindset that afflicts people who have been in a disastrous and unexpected auto accident. For a while, at least, the driver that ran that stop sign and broadsided us becomes the "typical driver," and ALL other drivers become sources of fear and loathing.

To us, the terrorists of al-Qaeda are still the "typical driver." We tend to attribute their desire to harm the United States and its people to all other insurgent groups, even though, of all the groups on the State Department's terrorist list, only a few have ever attacked Americans. Even where terrorists or insurgents do not attack our forces but only their own governments or members of rival groups, we say that "we" are under attack.

This confusion not only costs American lives and money but also operates as a self-fulfilling prophecy. For if we meddle in conflicts that have little to do with self-defense but much to do with exerting U.S. power abroad, groups that formerly had no interest in attacking us (like Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines or al-Shabaab in Somalia) suddenly find us in their crosshairs.

Each time that self-defense is proposed as a justification for war, there are four questions that need to be asked and answered fairly. Who and what, exactly, are we defending? Who and what, exactly, are we defending against? Is the chosen method of self-defense rational, in the sense that it works to make us safer? How long will it take -- and how much will it cost -- to produce that result?

These questions must be asked even when, as in the case of al-Qaeda and its allies, the answers seem obvious. Repeatedly, one hears U.S. government officials say, "We are at war. Terrorists are trying to kill us. We need to kill them first, not talk to them." Common sense, right? No, not really. In violent conflicts, the enemy is always trying to kill you. Even under these conditions, there are times when warring parties decide to try to settle their conflict peacefully, either through negotiation (that is, bargaining) or conflict resolution (discovering and eliminating the conflict's systemic causes). Many people believe that it is impossible to talk rationally or strategically with fanatics who believe that their violence fulfills the will of God. But there is a growing literature on the topic of dealing with terrorists, including those fighting under a religious banner, that suggests conditions under which talking may make very good sense.

My own view is that the United States ought not "negotiate" -- that is, bargain -- with al-Qaeda. We ought to engage in extensive conflict resolution processes with leading figures in the Islamic world, including militant Islamists, and invite al-Qaeda sympathizers to participate if they wish to do so. Thinking clearly about self-defense means discovering the best methods to provide Americans with long-term security. And long-term security depends on valued relationships, not

weapons of war. The United States does not have to disarm to begin to resolve conflicts like this one, but if it does not begin to resolve them, all the weapons in the world will not provide the safety we seek.

#3 Ask hard questions about evil enemies and moral crusades

There is evil in the world, no doubt. But when officials ask us to kill other people and risk our own lives to combat some great evil, they often diabolize the adversary, and we begin to imagine the enemy leader or even a whole people as transcendently Evil -- malicious, treacherous, power-mad, and cruel. Like the fallen angel, Lucifer, whom we picture as both super-human and super-bad, the Evil Enemy combines inhumanity with power: a frightening specter designed to rouse us to feats of heroic violence. Enemy images often represent a "shadow double" of ourselves -- a projection on some alien screen of characteristics we dislike and want to be rid of. Getting rid of these unworthy or shameful traits makes us feel purer and better -- the very opposite of the violent, fanatical, self-interested, and power-hungry Other. And so we feel equipped to engage in moral crusades, knowing that we will be able to act as altruists, not hedonists, liberators, not oppressors.

Because the Evil Enemy image is such strong medicine, hard questions ought to be asked as soon as it reappears. For example:

How is the word "evil" being used? Does it mean that the leader or group is diabolical in the sense of wanting to destroy everything good and decent? Does it refer to unusual ruthlessness or cruelty? To a desire to dominate a nation, a region, or the world? Or does it mainly indicate strong hostility towards the United States? (Defining evil does not mean giving up the right to use the word.)

Are there reasons other than evil character for this person or group to think and act this way? Can reasons be discovered in their own backgrounds or experiences? What about reasons rooted in the current situation, or in the behavior of other people, including Americans? (Discovering reasons will not excuse their actions.)

What are the possible responses to such a leader or group -- and which responses make most sense? Should we avoid talking with alleged enemies out of fear that negotiations or conflict resolution processes will compromise us and embolden them? Should we fight them -- and, if so, how can we assess the likely results of violent conflict? Is there some trusted third party who could help us resolve these issues? (Assessing alternative responses does not constitute inaction.)

#4. Analyze patriotic appeals. Resist campaigns of national purification.

Patriotism is not necessarily the last refuge of scoundrels, as Dr. Johnson quipped, but it is the ultimate argument for dubious wars. In its most primitive form, the catechism goes like this: Q: Do you love your country? A: Yes. Q: Are you willing to fight for it (or to send your family and friends to fight for it)? A: Yes.

We Americans are conditioned to slip quickly from the first Q and A to the second. The unspoken connective is: If you love your country, you will fight for it. But that is exactly the connection that needs to be proved in particular cases rather than asserted in general. Loving one's country does not mean following its leaders' orders no matter what they are. It certainly does not imply killing foreigners or putting American lives at risk on their command. To make that leap requires a different sort of catechism that ought to be administered to anyone advocating war.

Q: What do you mean by "love of country"?

This is a multiple choice question. The answers might include: (a) affection for certain people and places; (b) admiration for certain political, economic, and moral principles; (c) attachment to certain traditions and cultural products; and (d) participation in certain forms of communal life. Some people may consider this list incomplete, on the ground that love of country involves something more general and absolute, like a sense of being part of an ineffable whole: "the mystical body of the Nation." But loving one's country does not mean admiring all of its people, places, principles, cultural products, or forms of communal life. In fact, the more one loves certain aspects of America, the more one detests others.

Q: Why, in this particular case, does loving the country require fighting for it?:

The justification for war must show a connection between some specific aspect of the nation and a credible threat to it. We should not commit mass violence in support of theories that do not clearly identify the “America” in danger and show how it is being threatened. The justification must also show that force is the only way or best way to remove the threat, and that peaceful methods of resolving the conflict have been seriously attempted and will not work.

Meeting these requirements is difficult, but not impossible when a war is actually justified. In any case, war advocates should bear a heavy burden of proof. Unlike most other political questions, questions of war or peace operate on the plane of absolutes. In a democracy, we can fix most of our mistakes by throwing the rascals out or changing policies, but we cannot resuscitate the war dead or cure those permanently maimed in body or in spirit. Therefore, we are not only entitled but also required to ask whether the sacrifices demanded by war advocates are absolutely necessary in pursuit of our security and integrity. If a positive answer is not clear and convincing -- as loud and clear as God’s voice was to Abraham, when he lifted his knife over his son, Isaac -- we should not shed blood, either ours or anyone else’s.

#5 Demand that war advocates disclose their interests.

We Americans are fairly hard-headed people, ordinarily. If someone asks us to donate money to help the poor people of a far off land, or even to support our local police force or fire fighters, we want to know how much of the donation actually goes to the advertised cause, and how much ends up in other people’s pockets. But if we are asked to give our sons and daughters or our sweethearts to fight on foreign soil, patriotic sentiment or some other inhibitor often stops us from asking similarly blunt questions. Who stands to gain from the war? How many military careers, civilian jobs, executive salaries, and stockholder dividends hang in the balance as we decide whether or not to fight?

There is another reason why many people may be reluctant to ask these questions. According to many experts, we have been practicing “military Keynesianism” for some time, using enormous military expenditures to supply needed economic demand to a system plagued by congenital overproduction. Can Americans stop fighting wars (and stop supplying the rest of the world with weapons) without jeopardizing their jobs and the health of their communities? We urgently need to confront this issue openly, since it is putting us in an impossible moral position. Shall we sacrifice people’s lives and health in wars of dubious value in order to keep the economy afloat? Surely, there are ways of reorganizing the economic system that would eliminate this dilemma, even if the current “masters of the universe” do not want to think about them.

The war system’s main response to these varied concerns has been breathtakingly simple: minimize American casualties. Official thinking appears to be that if the number of American battle deaths and serious injuries can be greatly lowered, the public will find much less cause to complain about endless war making. Two responses to this are worth keeping in mind:

First, U.S. military experience since the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91 shows a significant decrease in American battlefield deaths, but horrifying increases in injuries generated by asymmetric warfare against groups wielding low-tech weapons, such as improvised explosive devices. Our VA hospitals are jammed with soldiers suffering the effects of severe head injuries, amputations, and post-traumatic stress -- and the suicide rate has shot through the roof.

Second, even if the number of US casualties could be lowered to zero, that would not secure our consent to the slaughter of foreigners in unjust wars. Those who believe that we would easily sacrifice other people’s lives in exchange for a guarantee of our own armed forces’ safety do not have a very high opinion of our moral character and beliefs. The idea that American lives are inherently more valuable than those of other people is not patriotism but a particularly vicious form of idolatry.

The current war system, with its pattern of continuous interventions in an ever-expanding zone of conflict, seems consciously or unconsciously designed to wean us from the habit of demanding justifications for specific wars. It is an act of faith, perhaps, to assert that Americans will remain unwilling to fight, except in a cause they are convinced is morally justified. Nevertheless, I will keep that faith, and invite you, dear reader, to keep it as well.

Richard Rubenstein is a Professor of Conflict Resolution and Public Affairs at George Mason University.

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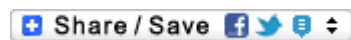
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Benjamin Woods: "Where Do We Go From Here?"

"Where Do We Go From Here?" or Reclaiming Martin Luther King Jr.

By Benjamin Woods [article link](#) [article link](#)

August 26, 2010 | FreetheLand | OpEdNews

“Tell the children the truth, yeah, the truth tell them about Martin Luther King, tell them the truth.”

-If I Were President Wyclef Jean

This Saturday August 28, 2010 is the 47th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. At this demonstration, Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) gave his most well-known and, at the same time, misunderstood speech. However, over the past few decades a controversy has erupted over the true legacy of MLK. The proto-fascist far right wing represented by Glenn Beck and the Tea party movement is sponsoring a march that, allegedly, supports the ideals of MLK. Similarly, the National Action Network and Al Sharpton are sponsoring a march to “Reclaim the Dream.” The truth is, neither one of these groups represent MLK. This weekend, as we are inundated with white corporate media propaganda, it is important to recall the final years of Dr. King’s life and legacy.

Following the passage of civil rights legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, MLK began to focus more on issues of economic justice. The economic problems that existed in the urban north were not the same as the segregated south. King began to question the very economic system itself stating “that something is wrong...with capitalism...there must be better distribution of wealth and maybe America must move towards a Democratic Socialism.”

His move towards socialism was also influenced by events in the so called Third World. King joined the Anti-War movement and took a stance against the War in Vietnam. In 1967, at Riverside Baptist Church in New York in a speech titled “A Time to Break the Silence” he called the United States “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world” because of the destruction caused by napalm and other mass killing devices used by “his own government.” And finally, influenced by the anti-colonial movements occurring in Africa and Asia he started to refer to the slums and ghettos of America as a “a system of internal colonialism.”

As writers such as Frantz Fanon have shown, colonialism is not just economic but cultural and psychological as well. Centuries of oppression in the form of enslavement and segregation have had devastating effects upon the self-image and consciousness of African people. He noted that the assertiveness and confrontational style of the Civil Rights Movement helped to develop self-respect among Africans in the south.

Moreover, as Black Power advocates such as Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party gained ascendancy, he rejected complete assimilation into American society and strove for community empowerment. King stated “we must use every constructive means to amass economic and political power. This is the kind of legitimate power we need. We must work to build racial pride and refute the notion that [B]lack is evil and ugly.”

After the civil right victories and his move to advance community empowerment, Dr. King prophetically warned of the rise of the right-wing in the United States. He stated “the line of progress is never straight. For a period a movement may follow a straight line and then it encounters obstacles and the path bends....we are encountering such a period today. The inevitable counterrevolution that succeeds every period of progress is taking place.” In 1968 Republican Richard “tricky dick” Nixon won the Presidency and by 1980 the counterrevolution was complete with the election of Ronald Reagan.

These two elected officials would usher in a period of fiscal conservatism, state repression, color blindness, and personal responsibility. Unlike some of today’s negro leaders, King didn’t describe our problems as laziness, poor morals, or lack of personal responsibility but as a result systemic forces. He stated “true compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it understands that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring” and “the roots of [economic injustice] are in the system rather than in the faulty operations of men.”

At the end of his life Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. argued for a “radical restructuring of society” and “a revolution of values.” Before his assassination, he was in the process of building a multi-racial Poor People’s campaign for economic and racial justice. Any march that claims to follow in his tradition should continue where he left off. His political and economic program included: a guaranteed annual income, free housing, free education, free healthcare, and an end to all wars of foreign aggression. He believed this could be achieved by a massive civil disobedience campaign in major urban centers that causes the political and economic life of this country to come to a halt until issues affecting the poor are completely eliminated. Unfortunately, neither of these marches represents the real MLK, therefore, it is on those who believe in his vision today to build a real social movement for a revolutionary transformation of human society.

Forgotten MLK Quotes

“We must rapidly shift from a ‘thing’-oriented society to a ‘person’-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.”

“Although genuinely popular [Negro] leaders are now emerging, most are selected by white leadership, elevated to position, supplied with resources and inevitably subjected to white control.”

“I contend that the debate over the question of self-defense was unnecessary since few people suggested that Negroes should not defend themselves as individuals when attacked. The question was not whether one should use his gun in his home was attacked, but whether it was tactically wise to use gun while participating in an organized demonstration.”

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Benjamin Woods: The purpose of this blog is to provide a political and cultural analysis of historical and contemporary events as they relate to people of African descent. In addition, I hope to submit proposals for strategy and tactics which will advance the African Freedom Movement thereby, contributing to the liberation of all humanity. The author utilizes a Revolutionary Black Nationalist, Pan-Africanist, and socialist perspective. This blog is a "maroon space" designed to encourage independent thinking and discussion free from corporate control. I am originally from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Currently, I am a Phd student in the Political Science department at Howard University and a member of student and community organizations.

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Friday, August 27, 2010

[Stephen Lendman: America Facing Depression And Bankruptcy](#)

America Facing Depression And Bankruptcy

By Stephen Lendman [article link](#)

27 August, 2010 | CounterCurrents

Long-time economic, political and market analyst Bob Chapman publishes the [International Forecaster](#), offering incisive analysis absent through mainstream sources, especially important now given America's deepening economic crisis getting harder to conceal as evidence mounts.

His August 25 issue says the following:

"Twenty countries (including America) are headed into bankruptcy and more will follow. That brings up the subject of state debt in the US. America has been in an inflationary depression for 18 months. States have been cutting back for two years," but still face huge budget gaps required to be closed....2011 will be a terrible year (with) 80% of states expect(ing) deficits of more than \$200 billion. 2012 looks even worse." Most worrisome, "there is no recovery and there never has been....the US economy and financial system is comatose." The worst is yet to come and will hit hard on arrival.

On August 24, economist David Rosenberg said, "Now (I'll) tell you why this is a depression, and not just some garden-variety recession," what he's been repeating for months unlike few others, corporate analysts claiming the fall 2007 downturn "ended sometime last year." Not so, it's deepened, growing evidence providing more clarity.

Offering a historical perspective, Rosenberg said the Great Depression wasn't marked by declining GDP each quarter. The 1929 - 33 recession lasted four years, followed by recovery and another "deep downturn" in 1937 - 38.

During the first one, "there were no fewer than six - six! - quarterly bounces in GDP data," averaging 8% at an annual rate, accompanied by sharp market increases, then declines confirming false positives. So "guess what? We may be reliving history (now). If you're keeping score, we have recorded four quarterly advances in real GDP," averaging only 3%. The late

1930s reversal showed "how fragile the post-bubble recovery really was," a faux one again repeated in a weaker economy now than then, one headed for serious trouble ahead, harming millions more Americans as a result.

The Fed cut interest rates to near zero with no effect, at best buying time, resolving nothing. "Then the Fed tripled the size of its balance sheet - again with little sustained impetus to a broken financial system."

Weeks back, then confirmed with new data, Rosenberg stressed weakness, numerous indicators turning down, including production, retail sales, consumer confidence, and housing, a bellwether industry impacting the entire economy. New reports show it's collapsing, some readings to record lows, others disturbingly weak throughout the country.

July existing home sales dropped 25.5%, the largest monthly decline since records began in 1968, bringing annualized sales back to 1995 levels, and signaling worse trouble ahead. Other housing data confirm the malaise, including new home sales, housing starts and permits.

As worrisome were increasing layoffs and first-time unemployment claims hitting 500,000, flashing red for trouble nearly three years after the initial downturn, combined with a near-22% unemployment rate, not the bogus 9.5% headline number, the 1980 calculation reengineered to conceal weakness like all other fake economic data, putting lipstick on an economy, increasingly looking and smelling more like a pig, a sick one.

According to Rosenberg, "You know you are in a depression when:

- "Congress (extends) jobless benefits seven times (in the past two years) when almost half (of those) unemployed have been looking for at least a half year;"

- the adult male unemployment rate (25 - 54 years) "hit a post-WW II (high and still tops) the 1982 peak," the worst then since the Great Depression;

- "youth unemployment is stuck near 25%," and for inner-city black youths it's 80% or higher; "these developments will have profound long-term consequences - social, economic and political;"

- the depression's fiscal costs keep mounting, the federal deficit soaring with no end to it in sight;

- for over a year into a supposed recovery, the Fed still contemplates new ways to stimulate growth, its tool, of course, printing money (funny money, or as one analyst calls it, "toilet paper") and quantitative easing, compounding the deficit, or the equivalent of throwing fuel on a fire instead of monetary and fiscal sanity plus sound economy policies to extinguish it;

- after two years of record trillion dollar plus deficits to kick-start the economy, interest rates are shockingly low, flashing weakness, not strength; to wit, on August 24, the 5-year note was 1.36%, 7-year at 1.95%, 10-year at 2.50%, and 30 year at 3.57%; as well as 30-year fixed mortgage rates at record lows below 4.5% (4.42% on August 24), despite "no fewer than eight (government) programs to put a floor under the housing market;" we're in big trouble "when (Washington) can expend so many resources (on) one sector" in vain;

- the FDIC keeps shuttering more banks; again, the carnage keeps spreading, yet most economists cling tenaciously an economic recovery theme, at most hit by a soft patch; Rosenberg's response - "Some recovery (when) the private credit market is basically defunct....what replaced it was rampant government intervention (buying time) by trying to (put) a floor under the economy;" once it stops, and it will, they'll be no hiding the dire truth, and no end of pain for growing millions.

The Worst Is Yet to Come

Financial expert and investor safety advocate Martin Weiss began warning about a major economic decline long before it began and keeps at it, citing evidence most analysts downplay or ignore, including:

-- America's worst ever housing depression showing no signs of abating; since January 2006, housing starts alone have plunged from 2.3 million annually to a recent 477,000 low that may not yet reflect a bottom because demand is so weak for this bellwether industry;

-- record long-term unemployment, its worst since first officially tabulated over 60 years ago; and

-- "the most chronic credit squeeze ever recorded....suffer(ing) its deepest plunge since WW II."

As a result, he sees deepening economic trouble ahead, no matter what steps the administration, Congress or the Fed undertake. He expects little more stimulus, just another futile central bank attempt to print money (lots of it) to buy time. "These paper dollars will not create real prosperity," just an illusory, "temporary, false prosperity," but none at all for most people, hung out to dry on their own.

He also expects a sovereign debt crisis to hammer Europe and the US, saying America's plight exceeds the dire situation of PIIGS countries (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain), citing the Bank of International Settlements (the central bank of central bankers) saying US debt will hit 400% of GDP, more than triple Greece's burden at 129% that plunged the country into (undeclared) bankruptcy. Indeed the worst for America is yet to come.

America Is Already Bankrupt

Boston University Economics Professor Laurence Kotlikoff explains it in his August 10 article, titled "US Is Bankrupt and We Don't Even Know It," saying:

"Let's get real. The US is bankrupt. Neither spending more nor taxing less will help the country pay its bills." What's needed, he says, is reengineering the economy by "radically simplify(ing) its tax, healthcare, retirement and financial systems...." Revitalization depends on it with unfunded liabilities topping \$110 trillion and growing. Even the IMF is worried, saying "closing (America's) fiscal gap requires a permanent annual fiscal adjustment equal to about 14 percent of US GDP," meaning, of course, from working households, not corporate interests or national security, the most glaring areas needing reform.

The fiscal gap represents "the difference between projected spending (including debt service) and projected revenue in all future years. (It's) the government's credit-card bill and each year's 14 percent GDP is the interest on that bill."

When it's not paid, it increases the balance owed. And each trillion the Fed prints bailing out bankers compounds it. Make them pay, not the public they robbed, starting with shutting them down, breaking them up, seizing their assets, and nationalizing them for the collective good.

Kotlikoff is scary saying "Uncle Sam's Ponzi scheme will stop, (perhaps) in a very nasty manner," citing three possibilities:

(1) massive benefit cuts on retirees;

(2) huge tax increases hitting working Americans hardest, and/or

(3) printing vast amounts of money ad infinitum until debt overload crashes the economy eventually.

Calling America "Worse than Greece," he believes "Most likely we will see a combination of all three responses with dramatic increases in poverty, tax(es), interest rates and consumer prices," the path we're on heading us for the worst of all possible worlds.

Based on the latest Congressional Budget Office (CBO) data, he calculates a \$202 trillion fiscal gap - "more than 15 times the official debt" because Congress "label(s) most of its liabilities 'unofficial' to keep them off the books, (out of sight) and far in the future" to concern other officials, not them. Labeling, of course, isn't fixing. It's just concealing unpleasant realities, letting others, not them, face the music in out years.

Current federal revenue totals \$14.9% of GDP, the IMF saying that closing it requires "an immediate and permanent doubling of our personal-income, corporate and federal taxes as well as the payroll levy set down in the Federal Insurance Contribution Act."

Such policy would produce a 5% surplus this year, the IMF prescribing ad infinitum fiscal austerity, saying delay will make it tougher ahead. "Is the IMF bonkers?" Not at all, just preferential, wanting workers, not special interests hit hardest, the way it's raped and mauled economies for years, serving capital, not people, now aiming at America, the biggest plum of all ripe for plucking with millions of vulnerable households, easy pickings for the powerful, harming, not relieving their needs by:

- cutting wages and benefits;
- destroying, not creating jobs; privatizing everything for private gain; and
- turning America into Guatemala, a corporatist's dream.

Indeed let's get real. Bad policy begets bad results, and bad solutions makes it worse. For sure, America is "broke and can no longer afford no-pain, all-gain 'solutions.' "

It needs responsible ones, too many to list, but here's a few:

- end imperial wars and a bloated defense budget;
- reinvent government to make it responsive to public needs and democratic values;
- make offenders pay most, starting with Wall Street, defense contractors, Big Oil, Big Pharma, Agribusiness, and other corporate predators profiting at public expense for decades;
- make now the time for payback, assuring their victims fair and equitable reimbursements;
- reinvigorate industrial America;
- end Wall Street's financial chokehold;
- return money creation power to Congress as the Constitution mandates;
- encourage publicly-owned state banks like North Dakota's, making it prosperous when most states are debt-strapped and faltering;
- create full-time, good-paying jobs with benefits; don't destroy them;
- bring back those offshored;
- protect homeowners from foreclosure;
- re-institute progressive taxes, including a Tobin tax (perhaps 1%) on all speculative financial transactions, a millionaire's/Wall Street bank levy generating a huge windfall, enough to smack if not close the budget gap, making those most able pay; for example, the Bank for International Settlements estimated annual 2008 global over-the-counter derivatives trading at \$743 trillion; a 1% tax would yield \$7.43 trillion, and if taxes curbed speculation, the take would still be enormous;
- dismantle corporate predators;

- think small and local, not big and global;
- reinstitute financial, environmental, and other consumer-friendly regulations;
- get money out of politics;
- end the two-party monopoly;
- institutionalize a free, open, fair media and Internet;
- assure equitable social benefits for all, including universal, single-payer health care, government-supported public and higher education, and more; and
- reinvigorate an eroding democracy before it's too late to matter.

Responsible policies, all of the above and more, will reinvigorate America. The unsustainable fiscal crisis is reason enough to do it.

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Thursday, August 26, 2010

[Giordano Bruno: Relax America, The Global Elites Love You...](#)

Relax America, The Global Elites Love You...

by Giordano Bruno [article link](#) [article link](#)

08/25/2010 | Neithercorp Press | Silver Bear Cafe

In the grand scheme of history, in the great wash of the collective American cosmos, in the midst of the day to day howls and earth rattles of towering financial and political giants, many of us tend to see ourselves as "the little people". We consider ourselves inconsequential in the wake of epic events that appear to rise and fall like irregular tides and determined by some frenetic force of chance; a great cultural roulette wheel. In fact, we are often encouraged to emulate this belief. Better to roll with the river of difficult times than to fight against the current in a fruitless attempt at changing its direction. Better to let more important and more powerful men blaze the trails that we will later follow, right...?

Human beings have a strange attachment to the concept of the "decision makers vs. the decision followers", even in the U.S. The Declaration of Independence was meant to herald the birth of a society which dissolved the separation between the rulers and those who are ruled. Our country was built upon the premise that every citizen has a right to participate in the making of his own providence, to play a part in the decisions that directly or indirectly affect his future. Of course, those were the days when average Americans saw themselves as giants, as innovators of history, not as little people.

Today, in the face of globalization, some American's see the evolution of a rulership class as natural and even necessary.

One of the most overwhelming aspects of the so called globalization (corporatization) of Western civilization has been the incredible amounts of lost time. We are thrust into a 70% service based economy in which the average person feels little to no pride in their work and absolutely no fulfillment. That same person then goes home at the end of the day to his digital cable T.V., which immerses him in visions of a happy-go-lucky planet, a fantasy realm that promises better days ahead but bears no resemblance to the world outside his living room. Like 'Alice in Wonderland', he finds himself surrounded by confusion, hypocrisy, and misdirection. A land of madmen and clowns. All the "professionals" he is told to trust make claims that seem outrageously incongruent with reality. Nothing is what it appears to be, and so, he stops questioning the illusion and pretends that the abracadabra of our elitist run America doesn't bother him. He stops caring, and so, his time on this Earth loses its value.

For the past several decades, those of us who have been aware of the smoke and mirrors and refuse to ignore their effects have paid a dear price; the anguish of witnessing the deconstruction of our nation, as well as the infantization of our friends and family.

When I was very young, I had certain assumptions about the path to adulthood. I believed that it was a transition that came as naturally to every person as walking or talking. Surely, I thought, there simply came a time when a man crossed a biological threshold that made him more responsible, more principled, more intuitive, more courageous, more compassionate, more wise. Now that I am much older, I find to my disappointment that wisdom does not necessarily come with age. Some people choose to remain children forever.

In a society driven by a fabricated sense of affluence, Americans have lost the memory of what it was like to deliberately build their futures. The concept of debt creation, mass credit movements, free money bonanzas, facilitated by the policies of the private Federal Reserve, made overgrown babies out of us all. We came to demand a pre-constructed future, one in which we were entitled to whatever we wanted NOW, not later. We never earned the engineered prosperity we have enjoyed since the baby-boom of the 1950's, and so we never learned to appreciate what true prosperity actually was; that it requires effort, and sometimes sacrifice. We merely expected that this was the way things were supposed to be, and that they would never change...

Infantized people are driven by a desperate search for ways to offload the responsibilities they inherit when they are forced to set off on their own lives. The idea of 'struggle' is abhorrent to them. As a result, they gravitate towards environments in which centralized authorities offer them the chance to simplify their existence in an ultimate sense. Essentially, like the children that they are, they look for a government which is willing to assume the role of 'parent' or legal guardian. They believe that out there, somewhere, a government system exists that is capable of cradling them in a blanket of pure safety and contentment from birth until death; a mother government. They believe in a ruling class that loves them unconditionally. They must! Why else would they blindly leave their fates in the hands of global bankers who now run both major parties of our political dynamic, dominate the ebb and flow of our economy, and write domestic policy? Why else would they ignore the signs of crisis that are ripping through the veil all around them? They must trust the Elites complicitly.

Many of us, when we were children, could not wait to take charge of our own lives without the constant prying eyes and prattling of our elders. Sometimes we forget that being a child can be carefree, but it also means doing what you are told. So, what price will the perpetual children of our society have to pay to be included in the feudal nanny state lifestyle of what globalist bankers and aristocrats commonly call the "New World Order"?

Austerity In A Nanny State?

EU member countries such as Greece are facing this awkward juxtaposition of economic elements today, and as elitists push for progressively bigger government in the U.S., we will be confronted with the same conundrum here. Austerity is basically the dissolution of national entitlement programs (welfare, social security, etc.) in an attempt to bridge gaps in budget shortfalls during financial crises and keep the government running. However, when that same government is attempting to administrate and micro-manage every detail of the lives of its citizens, Austerity and fiscal responsibility are not ideal. The fiat, as it were, must freely flow without question.

So, how will they solve this conflict? By continuing entitlement programs that keep the public hooked on government handouts, but diminishing the value of those handouts across the board. This is much like asking for a free lunch and being given a half-chewed sandwich. That is to say, welfare stipends will continue but become so small as to do more harm than good. The point of this is to acclimate the masses towards the idea of living on almost nothing while at the same time thanking the government for the opportunity to do so. One could just as easily live on almost nothing WITHOUT government handouts and table scraps with strings attached, but infantized Americans, desperate for a "loving" authority figure to lead the way, are unlikely to awaken to this fact.

Trading Privacy For The Illusion Of Safety

No government will ever be able to offer a guarantee of safety to its people. The more power officials are given to clamp down on citizens in the name of the "greater good", the more liable those officials are to abuse that power and become a danger to the public themselves. Some might call this a paradox, but it's not. Often, governments driven by elitist influences create fear in the citizenry so that they might exploit it. It is far preferable to fool an individual into asking you to take over his life, than it is to attempt to do so through brute force.

Infantized Americans always make the same statement when privacy rights are diminished; "If you have nothing to hide, then why does it matter if the government knows everything about you?" Firstly, because we get nothing out of the trade. Americans will not be safer under global centralization. Bigger governments do not prevent crime, they only mop up the aftermath and chase off curious onlookers. The only person that can be expected to provide for your personal safety is YOU. This is the reality that pro-nanny state people do not want to hear. They are frightened to death at the prospect that only they can ensure their own future. Most children are horrified at the idea of fending for themselves.

Secondly, no government has ever or will ever be honorable and forthright enough to assume the position of universal adjudicator. In America, you are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty, but in a world of constant surveillance, the government assumes that everyone is guilty unless proven otherwise. Surveillance creates a social atmosphere in which we must demonstrate our innocence everyday of our lives to some faceless official in a small room monitoring our every email, our every phone call, our every action. In short, whether or not I have "something to hide" is not for a bloated bureaucracy to decide. They will never be trustworthy enough to take on the task anyway. Instead, I think our country would be far safer if those cameras were turned the other way, into the White House, Congressman's homes, etc. Any full grown adult who is cowardly enough to demand that other people constantly keep watch over him to ensure he never has to protect himself deserves the fate he is dealt when his watchers take advantage of him.

Health And Government Indifference

Ask any veterans you know how they feel about going to their government run VA hospital. The vast majority of them will shudder at the thought. Why? Because governments and elitists traditionally do not care about the well being of the citizenry, they only care about maintaining their positions of influence. They are sociopathic, and sociopaths tend not to make great doctors. Sure, corporate health care has many problems, but can a corporate hospital label you mentally unstable and take away your Second Amendment rights? How often do corporate hospitals "accidentally" infect thousands of patients with HIV, hepatitis, or cancer? How many purposely reuse unsanitary equipment or IV bags? How many corporate hospitals then physically threaten reporters trying to get information on such activities? All of this and more is commonplace in government run VA facilities. And, if this is how our government treats Veterans who served with distinction, how do you think they will treat the rest of us?

Wealth "Harmonization"

We all hated the rich kid in high school whose daddy bought him every ridiculously extravagant item imaginable. Some of us later grew up and realized that substantial wealth is pretty irrelevant compared to substantial personal character. Others of us didn't grow up, and continued to hold a grudge.

The opportunity to become successful or wealthy is not the problem with America. The problem is those men who abuse wealth as a way to create an unequal playing field in which they never have to fairly compete with anyone else. America is not being destroyed by capitalist competitiveness. It is being destroyed by a complete lack of competitiveness! Wealth harmonization is yet another method by which this top 1% of the world's richest elites rig the game in their favor while fooling us into believing the system is more balanced.

Infantized Americans seem to think that asset redistribution is some magic math-blasting poverty buster. In fact, as efforts in the EU have revealed, harmonization does make everyone (except the top 1%) equal; it makes everyone equally poor. Rich countries degrade and lose the capacity to nurture productive and thriving societies while poor countries are lifted up just enough to appear more profitable but still stand on the edge of dire straights. The middle class slowly disappears, replaced by an enormous destitute population looking across an endless wage gap at the ultra rich, who only seem to benefit further from the so called "harmony".

Unaccountable Leadership

How often do children get a chance to "vote out" a parent that has abused their authority or committed great trespasses? Never. If infantized Americans are so keen on establishing a parent/child relationship with their government, the same rules will apply.

These men and women love to parrot the argument that "in our democratic society, the people ARE the government, and we can make any changes we want if something goes awry..." Strangely though, they never seem to acknowledge that our government's fundamental policy flaws never seem to change regardless of which party is in office. Infantized Americans like to focus on the opposing rhetoric of the two parties, but never their actions. If they did, they might finally understand that the Republicans and the Democrats at the highest levels have the exact same philosophies and goals, and therefore, the people have no real choice, and thus, we are NOT the government.

In the political tar pit we wallow in today, we do still at least have the ability through state and local governments to assert our sovereignty against federal imposition, but this is changing quickly. In a global union, a world order centered on the eradication of sovereignty and the deconstruction of the Constitution, this ability will be rendered useless.

It is odd to me that infantized Americans cling to the false perception that our federal government is democratic while at the same time supporting increasingly unconstitutional and undemocratic centralization of authority. It is as if they want to defer their responsibilities as citizens and be ruled, while still having the option of believing they are free to choose. This has perhaps been the goal all along; a perfect tyranny in which the total feudalized control of economy and culture is applauded by the dim witted masses yearning for complete autonomy from their own fear of self-determination while being convinced that they are still participating in the decision making process. Throw in some mandatory psychotropic medications and presto! You have a brave new world...

I've never quite understood our country's social addiction to naïve youth. Its one thing to maintain a sense of awe and wonder with life, to always be willing to learn and grow beyond what we are, but there is a big difference between being "child-like, and "childish". Surrendering the great gift of destiny, individuality, the inherent and inborn freedom to find one's own path, just to prolong the cavalier and comparatively boring sheltered existence of our tender years, seems rather insane to me. At bottom, infantized Americans are looking for only one freedom; freedom from the demands of life. The Global Elites are able to function in the significant capacity they do because they cater to this insanity. But is anyone really crazy enough to believe that the global elites do this because they care about us? Is it the love of a parental figure in the air that comforts the men-children of the world? Or, is it the long hollow death of conscience and concern that has placed them in a hypnotic baby stupor?

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:41 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Doug Kreeger: At War On Our Own Soil

At War On Our Own Soil - How Do We Fight Against the Right Wing?

By Doug Kreeger [article link](#)

August 26, 2010 | AlterNet

Day after day, we are battling the forces of evil on American soil as they attempt to regain political power at all costs. The truth is damned as they wage an all-out attack, using their "war on error." The weak mainstream press is no match for the narrative created by Rupert Murdoch's Fox News and *Wall Street Journal*, the GOP and the Tea Party. Often, they aid and abet the enemy by reporting their untruths in a misguided attempt to show "fairness."

Mainstream media are mistaken when they believe their job as journalists is to feature both sides of a story, because more often than not, one side is totally fabricated. It's destructive for journalists to promulgate spin. The rules of engagement no longer apply, leaving us to try and fight falsehoods after many people have already cemented their first impressions, thanks to the controlled and insidious right-wing propaganda machine.

Many of us may understand what is going on, but it seems that far more do not and are thus influenced by the lies and falsehoods that spew forth from conservative outlets. They appeal to people's most deep-seated fears, and give them comfort by showing that others actually agree with them.

Every election cycle, using Rovian politics, the right-wing creates issues causing millions of people to wrongly believe that conservatives champion their causes. In fact, the country's economic collapse is not the result of too much government, as they would like us to believe; it happened because there are still not enough of the right government controls. The idea of the common good has been redefined in such a way as to keep people voting against their own self-interests, by conservatives who promote the faulty thinking that the billions of dollars deferred by anti-tax movements, starting with Howard Jarvis' Prop 13 in 1978, was a good thing.

It's totally understandable why we are so enraged by this opposition. We generally get our views from some deep-seated attitudes we grew up with, whether they are liberal or progressive. Some of us even grew up as "Rockefeller Republicans." Each day, we also find comfort in reading pieces in the *New York Times* that reinforce our views, and we may check out the *Nation* or watch Rachel Maddow or the "Daily Show." We put ourselves in this silo and miss the enormity of what we are battling in the hearts and minds of millions of our neighbors. We get angrier and angrier each day and find our values being subverted without fail. When we wake up the day after Election Day, we will once again find ourselves as part of the quiet majority with no power and no mechanism to control the slide into the abyss of conservatism that plagues this nation.

The late Senator Patrick Daniel Moynihan declared long ago that while we are all entitled to our opinion, we are not entitled to our own facts. Certain information is factual and needs to be differentiated from the fiction of right-wing propaganda. We used to require broadcasters to mark the distinction between editorials and news. Now, news is merely a fabrication of events that either creates a tidal wave to promote a false sense of the common good, or reports enough information to support a group of advertisers that are keeping them in business. Broadcasters are always looking over their shoulders, and are anticipating their next steps based on polls and the fear of retribution.

So here I sit in the comfort of my home, reassured in the knowledge that many people share my concerns about what is happening in this country and the world. Yet to assuage the anger, we turn to our pundits for reinforcement and try to avoid the stress by busying ourselves with our lives.

The challenge today is to share our anger and anxiety in the most vocal and productive ways. We cannot just blunt our pain and retreat to the comfort of our shared believers. It's time to revolt and make sure we take action in the most productive and urgent ways. Like many, I am not sure what we need to do to turn this around. Yet, I can begin with questions. We need to set a clear agenda of action among common believers. We have to accept that we may not agree on everything, but at the

very least, we need to understand what would happen if we let these forces of evil take further control of our lives. As we retreat to our bunkers, let us ask questions that will lead us to success in this new American war.

1. Spending. If all the projects that were deferred over the years because of the anti-tax movement had been made, what would have been built that is now costing us billions in 2010 dollars either just to maintain, or replace? (Think of the crumbling roads and bridges around us.) What is the cost to future generations for putting off today's needed investments?

2. Education. For those who convinced taxpayers that to fix schools all we needed to do was rein in the unions and stop school spending, explain to me why we have crumbling buildings in the poorest districts and young people who are still not being given a fair chance with early education and reasonable class sizes? While we're at it, how come we live in a nation where a good education is determined by the wealth of one's neighbors?

3. War. It still sucks up so much of our tax dollars, everything else becomes discretionary. Why do we continue to spend a disproportionate share of our tax dollars on defense?

4. Jobs. We need to really come to grips with what type of jobs are going to be left in this country, as our grandchildren enter the workforce. As China declares it will spend billions on green technology, we're still pumping gas in big family cars and trucks because we didn't believe in the early '70s that our dependency on fossil fuels made our economy vulnerable. Look at the advances the Chinese will make in the technology we failed to advance through a strong public policy commitment. Capitalism is great, but state-controlled initiatives can often win out in the 21st century.

5. Healthcare. Just ask someone who is uninsured and uses the emergency room for a primary care physician. If we made incremental steps with the recent health care reform, we need to work hard to make what is good better and remove the bad parts that may make it fail in the long run. I'm no expert on this, but when politicians slice and dice good intentions, we tend to lose in this world of partisan and destructive politics.

6. National Debt. Let's accept that we need to spend our way out of this abyss, yet find ways to promote those sectors that in the long-term will create innovation and jobs, thus tax revenue to work our way down as we did in the '90s.

7. Government. Make sure we create a campaign finance system that differentiates between those who need the services only government can provide and corporations that use the government to increase their bottom line without regard to the public health and welfare.

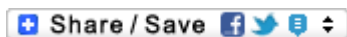
8. Media. How can we improve the dissemination of facts and points of view that lead to an understanding of the real challenges we face? Help us understand the facts behind these crucial questions that cannot be ignored and stop reporting distortions as if they are real.

We are at a pivotal juncture in our nation's history. Our value system is being challenged by forces willing to take away our basic freedoms in the guise of protecting us from evil. Religious freedom is being hijacked, by those who have determined that only they hold the superior moral high ground. We are a nation divided by greed and self-interest, without regard to our shared history, or a shared future. We now live in a country that fails to protect those most in need over those most willing to take.

Douglas Kreeger is the former CEO of Air America Radio and the chairman of AlterNet's parent organization, the [Independent Media Institute](#).

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Chalmers Johnson: 10 Needed Steps

The failure to begin to deal with our bloated military establishment will condemn the U.S. to devastating consequences.

10 Needed Steps for Obama to Start Dismantling America's Gigantic, Destructive Military Empire

By Chalmers Johnson [article link](#)

August 25, 2010 | AlterNet | Metropolitan Books

The following is an excerpt from Chalmers Johnson's new book, [Dismantling the Empire: America's Last Best Hope](#) (Metropolitan Books, 2010).

However ambitious President Barack Obama's domestic plans, one unacknowledged issue has the potential to destroy any reform efforts he might launch. Think of it as the 800-pound gorilla in the American living room: our longstanding reliance on imperialism and militarism in our relations with other countries and the vast, potentially ruinous global empire of bases that goes with it. The failure to begin to deal with our bloated military establishment and the profligate use of it in missions for which it is hopelessly inappropriate will, sooner rather than later, condemn the United States to a devastating trio of consequences: imperial overstretch, perpetual war, and insolvency, leading to a likely collapse similar to that of the former Soviet Union.

According to the 2008 official Pentagon inventory of our military bases around the world, our empire [consists of](#) 865 facilities in more than 40 countries and overseas U.S. territories. We deploy over 190,000 troops in 46 countries and territories. In just one such country, Japan, at the end of March 2008, we still had 99,295 people connected to U.S. military forces living and working there -- 49,364 members of our armed services, 45,753 dependent family members, and 4,178 civilian employees. Some 13,975 of these were crowded into the small island of Okinawa, the largest concentration of foreign troops anywhere in Japan.

These massive concentrations of American military power outside the United States are not needed for our defense. They are, if anything, a prime contributor to our numerous conflicts with other countries. They are also unimaginably expensive. According to Anita Dancs, an analyst for the website Foreign Policy in Focus, the United States [spends](#) approximately \$250 billion each year maintaining its global military presence. The sole purpose of this is to give us hegemony -- that is, control or dominance -- over as many nations on the planet as possible.

We are like the British at the end of World War II: desperately trying to shore up an empire that we never needed and can no longer afford, using methods that often resemble those of failed empires of the past -- including the Axis powers of World War II and the former Soviet Union. There is an important lesson for us in the British decision, starting in 1945, to liquidate their empire relatively voluntarily, rather than being forced to do so by defeat in war, as were Japan and Germany, or by debilitating colonial conflicts, as were the French and Dutch. We should follow the British example. (Alas, they are currently backsliding and following our example by assisting us in the war in Afghanistan.)

Here are three basic reasons why we must liquidate our empire or else watch it liquidate us.

1. We Can No Longer Afford Our Postwar Expansionism

Shortly after his election as president, Barack Obama, in a speech announcing several members of his new cabinet, [stated as fact](#) that "[w]e have to maintain the strongest military on the planet." A few weeks later, on March 12, 2009, in a speech at the National Defense University in Washington DC, the president again [insisted](#), "Now make no mistake, this nation will maintain our military dominance. We will have the strongest armed forces in the history of the world." And in a commencement address to the cadets of the U.S. Naval Academy on May 22nd, Obama [stressed](#) that "[w]e will maintain America's military dominance and keep you the finest fighting force the world has ever seen."

What he failed to note is that the United States no longer has the capability to remain a global hegemon, and to pretend otherwise is to invite disaster.

According to a growing consensus of economists and political scientists around the world, it is impossible for the United States to continue in that role while emerging into full view as a crippled economic power. No such configuration has ever persisted in the history of imperialism. The University of Chicago's Robert Pape, author of the important study [Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism](#) (Random House, 2005), typically [writes](#):

"America is in unprecedented decline. The self-inflicted wounds of the Iraq war, growing government debt, increasingly negative current-account balances and other internal economic weaknesses have cost the United States real power in today's world of rapidly spreading knowledge and technology. If present trends continue, we will look back on the Bush years as the death knell of American hegemony."

There is something absurd, even Kafkaesque, about our military empire. Jay Barr, a bankruptcy attorney, makes this point [using](#) an insightful analogy:

"Whether liquidating or reorganizing, a debtor who desires bankruptcy protection must provide a list of expenses, which, if considered reasonable, are offset against income to show that only limited funds are available to repay the bankrupted creditors. Now imagine a person filing for bankruptcy claiming that he could not repay his debts because he had the astronomical expense of maintaining at least 737 facilities overseas that provide exactly zero return on the significant investment required to sustain them... He could not qualify for liquidation without turning over many of his assets for the benefit of creditors, including the valuable foreign real estate on which he placed his bases."

In other words, the United States is not seriously contemplating its own bankruptcy. It is instead ignoring the meaning of its precipitate economic decline and flirting with insolvency.

Nick Turse, author of [The Complex: How the Military Invades our Everyday Lives](#) (Metropolitan Books, 2008), [calculates](#) that we could clear \$2.6 billion if we would sell our base assets at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and earn another \$2.2 billion if we did the same with Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. These are only two of our over 800 overblown military enclaves.

Our unwillingness to retrench, no less liquidate, represents a striking historical failure of the imagination. In his first official visit to China since becoming Treasury Secretary, Timothy Geithner assured an audience of students at Beijing University, "Chinese assets [invested in the United States] are very safe." According to [press reports](#), the students responded with loud laughter. Well they might.

In May 2009, the Office of Management and Budget predicted that in 2010 the United States will be burdened with a budget deficit of at least \$1.75 trillion. This includes neither a projected \$640 billion budget for the Pentagon, nor the costs of waging two remarkably expensive wars. The sum is so immense that it will take several generations for American citizens to repay the costs of George W. Bush's imperial adventures -- if they ever can or will. It represents about 13% of our current gross domestic product (that is, the value of everything we produce). It is worth noting that the [target demanded](#) of European nations wanting to join the Euro Zone is a deficit no greater than 3% of GDP.

Thus far, President Obama has announced measly cuts of only \$8.8 billion in wasteful and worthless weapons spending, including his cancellation of the F-22 fighter aircraft. The actual Pentagon budget for next year will, in fact, [be larger](#), not smaller, than the bloated final budget of the Bush era. Far bolder cuts in our military expenditures will obviously be required in the very near future if we intend to maintain any semblance of fiscal integrity.

2. We Are Going to Lose the War in Afghanistan and It Will Help Bankrupt Us

One of our major strategic blunders in Afghanistan was not to have recognized that both Great Britain and the Soviet Union attempted to pacify Afghanistan using the same military methods as ours and failed disastrously. We seem to have learned nothing from Afghanistan's modern history -- to the extent that we even know what it is. Between 1849 and 1947, Britain sent almost annual expeditions against the Pashtun tribes and sub-tribes living in what was then called the North-West Frontier Territories -- the area along either side of the artificial border between Afghanistan and Pakistan called the Durand Line. This frontier was created in 1893 by Britain's foreign secretary for India, Sir Mortimer Durand.

Neither Britain nor Pakistan has ever managed to establish effective control over the area. As the eminent historian Louis Dupree put it in his book [Afghanistan](#) (Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 425): "Pashtun tribes, almost genetically expert at guerrilla warfare after resisting centuries of all comers and fighting among themselves when no comers were available, plagued attempts to extend the Pax Britannica into their mountain homeland." An estimated 41 million Pashtuns live in an undemarcated area along the Durand Line and profess no loyalties to the central governments of either Pakistan or Afghanistan.

The region known today as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan is administered directly by Islamabad, which -- just as British imperial officials did -- has [divided](#) the territory into seven agencies, each with its own "political agent" who wields much the same powers as his colonial-era predecessor. Then as now, the part of FATA known as Waziristan and the home of Pashtun tribesmen offered the fiercest resistance.

According to Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould, experienced Afghan hands and coauthors of [Invisible History: Afghanistan's Untold Story](#) (City Lights, 2009, p. 317):

"If Washington's bureaucrats don't remember the history of the region, the Afghans do. The British used air power to bomb these same Pashtun villages after World War I and were condemned for it. When the Soviets used MiGs and the dreaded Mi-24 Hind helicopter gunships to do it during the 1980s, they were called criminals. For America to use its overwhelming firepower in the same reckless and indiscriminate manner defies the world's sense of justice and morality while turning the Afghan people and the Islamic world even further against the United States."

In 1932, in a series of Guernica-like atrocities, the British used poison gas in Waziristan. The disarmament convention of the same year sought a ban against the aerial bombardment of civilians, but Lloyd George, who had been British prime minister during World War I, gloated: "We insisted on reserving the right to bomb niggers" (Fitzgerald and Gould, p. 65). His view prevailed.

The U.S. continues to act similarly, but with the new excuse that our killing of noncombatants is a result of "collateral damage," or human error. Using [pilotless drones](#) guided with only minimal accuracy from computers at military bases in the Arizona and Nevada deserts among other places, we have killed hundreds, perhaps thousands, of unarmed bystanders in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Pakistani and Afghan governments have repeatedly warned that we are alienating precisely the people we claim to be saving for democracy.

When in May 2009, General Stanley McChrystal was appointed as the commander in Afghanistan, he ordered new limits on air attacks, including those carried out by the CIA, except when needed to protect allied troops. Unfortunately, as if to illustrate the incompetence of our chain of command, only two days after this order, on June 23, 2009, the United States carried out a drone attack against a funeral procession that [killed at least 80 people](#), the single deadliest U.S. attack on Pakistani soil so far. There was virtually no reporting of these developments by the mainstream American press or on the network television news. (At the time, the media were almost totally preoccupied by the sexual adventures of the governor of South Carolina and the death of pop star Michael Jackson.)

Our military operations in both Pakistan and Afghanistan have long been plagued by inadequate and inaccurate intelligence about both countries, ideological preconceptions about which parties we should support and which ones we should oppose, and myopic understandings of what we could possibly hope to achieve. Fitzgerald and Gould, for example, charge that, contrary to our own intelligence service's focus on Afghanistan, "Pakistan has always been the problem." They add:

"Pakistan's army and its Inter-Services Intelligence branch... from 1973 on, has played the key role in funding and directing first the *mujahideen* [anti-Soviet fighters during the 1980s]... and then the Taliban. It is Pakistan's army that controls its nuclear weapons, constrains the development of democratic institutions, trains Taliban fighters in suicide attacks and orders them to fight American and NATO soldiers protecting the Afghan government." (p. 322-324)

The Pakistani army and its intelligence arm are staffed, in part, by devout Muslims who fostered the Taliban in Afghanistan to meet the needs of their own agenda, though not necessarily to advance an Islamic *jihād*. Their purposes have always included: keeping Afghanistan free of Russian or Indian influence, providing a training and recruiting ground for

mujahideen guerrillas to be used in places like Kashmir (fought over by both Pakistan and India), containing Islamic radicalism in Afghanistan (and so keeping it out of Pakistan), and extorting huge amounts of money from Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf emirates, and the United States to pay and train "freedom fighters" throughout the Islamic world. Pakistan's consistent policy has been to support the clandestine policies of the Inter-Services Intelligence and thwart the influence of its major enemy and competitor, India.

Colonel Douglas MacGregor, U.S. Army (retired), an adviser to the Center for Defense Information in Washington, [summarizes](#) our hopeless project in South Asia this way: "Nothing we do will compel 125 million Muslims in Pakistan to make common cause with a United States in league with the two states that are unambiguously anti-Muslim: Israel and India."

Obama's mid-2009 "surge" of troops into southern Afghanistan and particularly into Helmand Province, a Taliban stronghold, is fast becoming darkly reminiscent of General William Westmoreland's continuous requests in Vietnam for more troops and his promises that if we would ratchet up the violence just a little more and tolerate a few more casualties, we would certainly break the will of the Vietnamese insurgents. This was a total misreading of the nature of the conflict in Vietnam, just as it is in Afghanistan today.

Twenty years after the forces of the Red Army withdrew from Afghanistan in disgrace, the last Russian general to command them, Gen. Boris Gromov, [issued](#) his own prediction: Disaster, he insisted, will come to the thousands of new forces Obama is sending there, just as it did to the Soviet Union's, which lost some 15,000 soldiers in its own Afghan war. We should recognize that we are wasting time, lives, and resources in an area where we have never understood the political dynamics and continue to make the wrong choices.

3. We Need to End the Secret Shame of Our Empire of Bases

In March, *New York Times* op-ed columnist Bob Herbert [noted](#), "Rape and other forms of sexual assault against women is the great shame of the U.S. armed forces, and there is no evidence that this ghastly problem, kept out of sight as much as possible, is diminishing." He continued:

"New data released by the Pentagon showed an almost 9 percent increase in the number of sexual assaults -- 2,923 -- and a 25 percent increase in such assaults reported by women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan [over the past year]. Try to imagine how bizarre it is that women in American uniforms who are enduring all the stresses related to serving in a combat zone have to also worry about defending themselves against rapists wearing the same uniform and lining up in formation right beside them."

The problem is exacerbated by having our troops garrisoned in overseas bases located cheek-by-jowl next to civilian populations and often preying on them like foreign conquerors. For example, sexual violence against women and girls by American GIs has been out of control in Okinawa, Japan's poorest prefecture, ever since it was permanently occupied by our soldiers, Marines, and airmen some 64 years ago.

That island was the scene of the largest anti-American demonstrations since the end of World War II after the 1995 kidnapping, rape, and attempted murder of a 12-year-old schoolgirl by two Marines and a sailor. The problem of rape has been ubiquitous around all of our bases on every continent and has probably contributed as much to our being loathed abroad as the policies of the Bush administration or our economic exploitation of poverty-stricken countries whose raw materials we covet.

The military itself has done next to nothing to protect its own female soldiers or to defend the rights of innocent bystanders forced to live next to our often racially biased and predatory troops. "The military's record of prosecuting rapists is not just lousy, it's atrocious," writes Herbert. In territories occupied by American military forces, the high command and the State Department make strenuous efforts to enact so-called "Status of Forces Agreements" (SOFAs) that will prevent host governments [from gaining jurisdiction](#) over our troops who commit crimes overseas. The SOFAs also make it easier for our military to spirit culprits out of a country before they can be apprehended by local authorities.

This issue was well illustrated by the case of an Australian teacher, a long-time resident of Japan, who in April 2002 was raped by a sailor from the aircraft carrier USS *Kitty Hawk*, then based at the big naval base at Yokosuka. She identified her assailant and reported him to both Japanese and U.S. authorities. Instead of his being arrested and effectively prosecuted, the victim herself was harassed and humiliated by the local Japanese police. Meanwhile, the U.S. discharged the suspect from the Navy but allowed him to escape Japanese law by returning him to the U.S., where he lives today.

In the course of trying to obtain justice, the Australian teacher discovered that almost fifty years earlier, in October 1953, the Japanese and American governments signed a secret "understanding" as part of their SOFA in which Japan agreed to waive its jurisdiction if the crime was not of "national importance to Japan." The U.S. argued strenuously for this codicil because it feared that otherwise it would face the likelihood of some 350 servicemen per year being sent to Japanese jails for sex crimes.

Since that time the U.S. has negotiated similar wording in SOFAs with Canada, Ireland, Italy, and Denmark. According to the *Handbook of the Law of Visiting Forces* (2001), the Japanese practice has become the norm for SOFAs throughout the world, with predictable results. In Japan, of 3,184 U.S. military personnel who committed crimes between 2001 and 2008, 83% were not prosecuted. In Iraq, we have just signed a SOFA that bears a strong resemblance to the first postwar one we had with Japan: namely, military personnel and military contractors accused of off-duty crimes will remain in U.S. custody while Iraqis investigate. This is, of course, a perfect opportunity to spirit the culprits out of the country before they can be charged.

Within the military itself, the journalist Dahr Jamail, author of [Beyond the Green Zone: Dispatches from an Unembedded Journalist in Occupied Iraq](#) (Haymarket Books, 2007), speaks of the "culture of unpunished sexual assaults" and the "shockingly low numbers of courts martial" for rapes and other forms of sexual attacks. Helen Benedict, author of [The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq](#) (Beacon Press, 2009), quotes this figure in a 2009 Pentagon report on military sexual assaults: 90% of the rapes in the military are never reported at all and, when they are, the consequences for the perpetrator are negligible.

It is fair to say that the U.S. military has created a worldwide sexual playground for its personnel and protected them to a large extent from the consequences of their behavior. As a result a group of female veterans in 2006 created the Service Women's Action Network (SWAN). Its agenda is to spread the word that "no woman should join the military."

I believe a better solution would be to radically reduce the size of our standing army, and bring the troops home from countries where they do not understand their environments and have been taught to think of the inhabitants as inferior to themselves.

10 Steps Toward Liquidating the Empire

Dismantling the American empire would, of course, involve many steps. Here are ten key places to begin:

- 1.** We need to put a halt to the serious environmental damage done by our bases planet-wide. We also need to stop writing SOFAs that exempt us from any responsibility for cleaning up after ourselves.
- 2.** Liquidating the empire will end the burden of carrying our empire of bases and so of the "opportunity costs" that go with them -- the things we might otherwise do with our talents and resources but can't or won't.
- 3.** As we already know (but often forget), imperialism breeds the use of torture. In the 1960s and 1970s we helped overthrow the elected governments in Brazil and Chile and underwrote regimes of torture that prefigured our own treatment of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan. (See, for instance, A.J. Langguth, [Hidden Terrors](#) [Pantheon, 1979], on how the U.S. spread torture methods to Brazil and Uruguay.) Dismantling the empire would potentially mean a real end to the modern American record of using torture abroad.

4. We need to cut the ever-lengthening train of camp followers, dependents, civilian employees of the Department of Defense, and hucksters -- along with their expensive medical facilities, housing requirements, swimming pools, clubs, [golf courses](#), and so forth -- that follow our military enclaves around the world.
5. We need to discredit the myth promoted by the military-industrial complex that our military establishment is valuable to us in terms of jobs, scientific research, and defense. These alleged advantages have [long been discredited](#) by serious economic research. Ending empire would make this happen.
6. As a self-respecting democratic nation, we need to stop being the world's largest exporter of arms and munitions and quit educating Third World militaries in the techniques of torture, military coups, and service as proxies for our imperialism. A prime candidate for immediate closure is the so-called School of the Americas, the U.S. Army's infamous military academy at Fort Benning, Georgia, for Latin American military officers. (See Chalmers Johnson, [The Sorrows of Empire](#) [Metropolitan Books, 2004], pp. 136-40.)
7. Given the growing constraints on the federal budget, we should abolish the Reserve Officers' Training Corps and other long-standing programs that [promote militarism](#) in our schools.
8. We need to restore discipline and accountability in our armed forces by radically scaling back our reliance on civilian contractors, private military companies, and agents working for the military outside the chain of command and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. (See Jeremy Scahill, [Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army](#) [Nation Books, 2007]). Ending empire would make this possible.
9. We need to reduce, not increase, the size of our standing army and deal much more effectively with the wounds our soldiers receive and combat stress they undergo.
10. To repeat the main message of this essay, we must give up our inappropriate reliance on military force as the chief means of attempting to achieve foreign policy objectives.

Unfortunately, few empires of the past voluntarily gave up their dominions in order to remain independent, self-governing polities. The two most important recent examples are the British and Soviet empires. If we do not learn from their examples, our decline and fall is foreordained.

Excerpted from DISMANTLING THE EMPIRE: AMERICA'S LAST BEST HOPE, published this month by Metropolitan Books, an imprint of Henry Holt and Company, LLC. Copyright (c) 2010 by Chalmers Johnson. All rights reserved.

[Chalmers Johnson](#) is the author of *Blowback* (2000), *The Sorrows of Empire* (2004), and *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic* (2006), among other works. His newest book, [Dismantling the Empire: America's Last Best Hope](#) (Metropolitan Books), has just been published. To listen to Timothy MacBain's latest TomCast audio interview in which Johnson discusses America's empire of bases and his new book, click [here](#) or, to download it to your iPod, [here](#).

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Tuesday, August 24, 2010

Dave Lefcourt: America's Path of Ignoble Ignominy

America's Path of Ignoble Ignominy

By Dave Lefcourt [article link](#)

August 24, 2010 | OpEdNews

If one is a true patriot of this country, he (she) should be appalled at our government's policies i.e. the preemptive and unnecessary wars, the drone attacks and the killing of innocents, our resort to torture, the extraordinary rendition and detention of suspects without charges, the warrantless wiretapping to name a few of the more despicable acts we have descended to use.

That our government has sided with the mega banks, the corporate behemoths and the richest 1% over the working man and woman should make one boil with contempt for its government's betrayal of the majority of the American people.

We have been propagandized and used, many infantilized by insidious advertizing and marketing, treated as fodder and unthinking fools by the charlatans in corporate board rooms as well as the sycophants in elected office that they bankroll and are beholden to do their bidding.

Every two years and every four years we trudge to the polls to elect the same "palookas" or someone else, different only in person, while getting the same awful results.

Instead of storming the "Bastille" and overthrowing the knaves in power who perpetrated and perpetuate our present plight, we've become passive and obedient, trudging to work (if we still have a job), scraping to pay the bills and make ends meet, resisting foreclosure and bankruptcy, seemingly resigned to accepting the plight before us, too tired and beaten down, too bereft of energy, the life in us all but gone.

If there's anything to be heard it comes from the screeching megaphone of the far right tea bagger nativist, propagandized by the likes of Limbaugh and Beck and the idiot Palin revving the raucous crowds with aspersions of Islamaphobia, Obama is a Muslim and is not native born, yelling and screaming to kill government instead of demanding it do the job correctly and effectively to the benefit of the people.

But from the rest we get a collective yawn, too scared to risk losing the meager pittance they've managed to hold on to.

What must happen for us to be so shaken and demand we won't take it anymore?

If the worst recession since the great depression didn't do it, what will? The Treasury has been raided and looted to make the banking bandits whole again, knowing as they do that the next financial crisis and economic calamity they perpetrate the government will come to the rescue, even as they sing and tout the virtues of unfettered capitalism while being beggars feeding at the social welfare tit of taxpayer money.

Why haven't there been massive demonstrations on Wall Street, the Federal Reserve, the Congress and the White House?

It is both saddening and harrowing to witness our slow but seemingly inexorable decline from being a beacon of light in the world to becoming the arrogant bully full of imperial hubris using terrorism and terrorists as the new enemy (replacing defunct Communism) the new menace we must fight to the death in our endless and unnecessary wars.

It can no longer be "My country right or wrong", not when our republic has become an imperialistic hegemonic tyrant, doing more to destabilize the world (while in the name of bringing freedom and democracy) than any terrorist Osama bin Laden could possibly even imagine, never mind actually do.

Only the American people can rescue ourselves, reclaim our government and our country from the ruinous, ignoble and ignominious path we have been traveling. Let's hope it isn't too late.

Dave Lefcourt is retired, and the author of "[Deceit and Excess in America: How Moneyed Interests Have Stolen America And How We Can Get It Back](#)", Authorhouse, 2009. His email address is dglefc22733@aol.com.

About the Book:

“Deception is eating out soul. It corrupts and debases us. Whatever moral good we have stood for has been eroded by this disease. Its legacy is our resort to torture in our misapplied “war on terrorism”, exhumed out of the ruins of 9/11...

Our economic and financial meltdown is a direct result of excesses and wild speculation by Wall Street ... the tentacles of deceit reach into our institutions, both public and private. We have government by deception, deception in business ... even war by deception.

We are a people that have been propagandized by those interests that control the reins of power.

America was not always this way.

There have always been moneyed interests in this country who exploited and used their means ... and by virtue of that wealth, they always have had influence on the government, but they did not control all the reins of power as they do today.

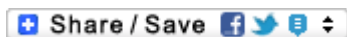
America has been usurped by the moneyed interests whose power is derived from the influence that money bestows upon them.

It is all of one piece, not formally connected, but intertwined with tentacles that reach everywhere in a headlong pursuit to acquire as much money and power through the use of any methods and schemes, whether it is done ruthlessly or through public relations, ... marketed through high powered lobbying or simple direct corruption, with no concern for any principle other than the pursuits of money and power, and the public interests be damned in the process.

We must embrace the idea of our elected officials being accountable to the people. The Constitution of the United States starts with, “We the people”... not the President, not the Congress, not the Supreme Court, but, “We the people.” As Franklin warned, “... a Republic, if we can keep it.”

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:44 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Monday, August 23, 2010

Grace Lee Bogs: Living for Change: If Not Now, When?

Living for Change: If Not Now, When?

by Grace Lee Bogs [article link](#)

August 23, 2010 | CommonDreams

I won't be marching with Jesse Jackson in the March called by the UAW and the NAACP to commemorate the August 28, 1963 March on Washington.

That's not only because at 95 my marching days are over.

As early as 1963, Malcolm X called the "I have a Dream" March a "Farce on Washington" because John Lewis had been forced to delete from his speech any references to Revolution and Power by the MOW's "Big 6" organizers: A. Philip Randolph, Dr. King/SCLC, Roy Wilkins/ NAACP, James Farmer/CORE, Whitney Young/Urban League, John Lewis/SNCC.

Marchers were also instructed to carry only official signs and allowed to sing only one song 'We shall overcome,' (see p. 127, [Living for Change](#)).

Malcolm never put lipstick on a pig. Malcolm thought outside the box. If he were alive NOW, he would be telling us that we should no longer be marching. We should no longer be protesting. We should no longer be dreaming. We should no longer be encouraging democratic illusions.

- WHEN millions of Americans do not have meaningful work,
- WHEN as a result of our obsession with economic growth, wildfires in Russia burn dangerously close to nuclear plants and millions drown from floods and mudslides in Pakistan, China and Iowa,
- WHEN Congress decides to cut back food stamps for the poor and hungry in order to provide paychecks for public employees because trillions are being thrown away on unwinnable wars in the Middle East and military bases around the world,
- WHEN our cities are dying because corporations are exporting jobs oversea to make bigger profits,
- WHEN our prison population is the highest in the world because our schools structured in the factory age have become pipelines to prison,

IT IS TIME TO STOP DREAMING AND PROTESTING.

Instead in every community and city we should be discussing how to make the "Radical Revolution of Values" not only against Racism but against Materialism and Militarism that Dr. King called for in his 1967 anti-Vietnam war speech.

King's call for this "Radical Revolution" came only four years after his 1963 "I have a Dream" speech. But in those few years, youth in Watts, California and other cities had risen in Rebellion. In Chicago King and anti-racist marchers had experienced the raw ugliness of Northern racism. The genocidal war in Vietnam had exposed our country as the world's worst purveyor of violence and on the wrong side of the world revolution.

That is why in 1967 King decided that the time had come to warn the American people that unless we make a Radical Revolution in Values, we face spiritual death.

In 2010, 42 years later, we are experiencing massive physical and spiritual death.

Why are we STILL marching and dreaming?

Why are we not making a "radical revolution in values"?

Why are we STILL obsessed with economic growth?

Why are we STILL allowing corporations to deprive us of jobs by replacing human beings on the line with robots and by exporting jobs overseas to make greater profits?

Why are we STILL accepting the dictatorship of technology and of corporations?

THE TIME HAS COME to

- slow down global warming by building sustainable local economies and by living more simply.
- reject the dictatorship of technology so that it is no longer normal and natural to replace human beings with robots.
- stop corporations from exporting jobs overseas.
- end factory-type schooling and start engaging schoolchildren in local community rebuilding.

LET'S START THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX!

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

Grace Lee Boggs has been an activist for more than 60 years and is the author of the autobiography [Living for Change](#).

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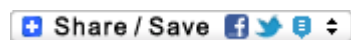
The Economy Is Getting Worse and Worse -- And No One's Doing a Thing About It

The economy is already down, and it can go lower. And no one seems willing to fix it.

By Danny Schechter [article link](#)

August 22, 2010 | AlterNet

AlterNet [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:34 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Robert Jensen: There Are No Heroes in Illegal and Immoral Wars

There Are No Heroes in Illegal and Immoral Wars

by Robert Jensen [article link](#)

August 23, 2010 | CommonDreams

When the 4th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division rolled out of Iraq last week, the colonel commanding the brigade told a reporter that his soldiers were "leaving as heroes."

While we can understand the pride of professional soldiers and the emotion behind that statement, it's time for Americans -- military and civilian -- to face a difficult reality: In seven years of the deceptively named "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and nine years of "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan, no member of the U.S. has been a hero.

This is not an attack on soldiers, sailors, and Marines. Military personnel may act heroically in specific situations, showing courage and compassion, but for them to be heroes in the truest sense they must be engaged in a legal and morally justifiable conflict. That is not the case with the U.S. invasions and occupations of Iraq or Afghanistan, and the social pressure on us to use the language of heroism -- or risk being labeled callous or traitors -- undermines our ability to evaluate the politics and ethics of wars in a historical framework.

The legal case is straightforward: Neither invasion had the necessary approval of the United Nations Security Council, and neither was a response to an imminent attack. In both cases, U.S. officials pretended to engage in diplomacy but demanded war. Under international law and the U.S. Constitution (Article 6 is clear that "all Treaties made," such as the UN Charter, are "the supreme Law of the Land"), both invasions were illegal.

The moral case is also clear: U.S. officials' claims that the invasions were necessary to protect us from terrorism or locate weapons of mass destruction were never plausible and have been exposed as lies. The world is a more dangerous place today than it was in 2001, when sensible changes in U.S. foreign policy and vigorous law enforcement in collaboration with other nations could have made us safer.

The people who bear the greatest legal and moral responsibility for these crimes are the politicians who send the military to war and the generals who plan the actions, and it may seem unfair to deny the front-line service personnel the label of "hero" when they did their duty as they understood it. But this talk of heroism is part of the way we avoid politics and deny the unpleasant fact that these are imperial wars. U.S. military forces are in the Middle East and Central Asia not to bring freedom but to extend and deepen U.S. power in a region home to the world's most important energy resources. The nation exercising control there increases its influence over the global economy, and despite all the U.S. propaganda, the world realizes we have tens of thousands of troops on the ground because of those oil and gas reserves.

Individuals can act with courage and compassion serving in imperial armies. There no doubt were soldiers among the British forces in colonial India who acted heroically, and Soviet soldiers stationed in Eastern Europe were capable of bravery. But they were serving in imperial armies engaged in indefensible attempts to dominate and control. They were fighting not for freedom but to advance the interests of elites in their home countries.

I recognize the complexity of the choices the men and women serving in our military face. I am aware that economic realities and the false promises of recruiters lure many of them into service. I am not judging or condemning them. Judgments and condemnations should be aimed at the powerful, who typically avoid their responsibility. For example, a journalist recently asked Ryan Crocker, former U.S. ambassador to Iraq, to reflect on U.S. culpability for the current state of Iraqi politics. Crocker was reluctant to go there, and then refused even to consider the United States' moral responsibility: "You can ask the question, was the whole bloody thing a mistake?" he said. "I don't spend a lot of time on that."

It's not surprising U.S. policymakers don't want to reflect on the invasions, but the public must. Until we can tell the truth about U.S. foreign policy, and how the military is used to advance that policy in illegal and immoral ways, we will remain easy marks for the politicians and their propagandists.

Part of that propaganda campaign is suggesting that critics of the war don't support the troops, don't recognize their sacrifices, don't appreciate their heroism. We escape the propaganda by not playing that game, by telling the truth even when it is painful.

Robert Jensen is a journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin and board member of the [Third Coast Activist Resource Center](#) in Austin. He is the author of [All My Bones Shake: Seeking a Progressive Path to the Prophetic Voice](#), (Soft Skull Press, 2009); [Getting Off: Pornography and the End of Masculinity](#) (South End Press, 2007); [The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege](#) (City Lights, 2005); [Citizens of the Empire: The Struggle to Claim Our Humanity](#) (City Lights, 2004); and [Writing Dissent: Taking Radical Ideas from the Margins to the Mainstream](#) (Peter Lang, 2002). Jensen is also co-producer of the documentary film "[Abe Osheroff: One Foot in the Grave, the Other Still Dancing](#)," which chronicles the life and philosophy of the longtime radical activist. Information about the film, distributed by the Media Education Foundation, and an extended interview Jensen conducted with Osheroff are online [here](#).

Jensen can be reached at rjensen@uts.cc.utexas.edu and his articles can be found online [here](#). To join an email list to receive articles by Jensen, click [here](#).

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What You Will Not Hear About Iraq: U.S. Occupation of Iraq More Than Doubles Poverty, Sickness -- Leaves Country a Total Disaster

The American public has no idea just how terrible we've made conditions in Iraq.

By Adil E. Shamoo [article link](#) [article link](#)

August 22, 2010 | AlterNet | ICH

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The Feds Don't Like Competition

As we observe a partial drawdown from Iraq, the American legacy includes not just the destruction of people and economy, of lawfulness and liberty, both in Iraq and the U.S., but as Robert Fisk so eloquently explains, "...we have brought the Iraqis a plague..." of civil war, terror and political manipulations and double dealing in Baghdad and Kurdistan for decades to come. But as the US government itself seeks stability, now is the time to nip its competition in the bud.

by Karen Kwiatkowski [article link](#)

August 23, 2010 | LewRockwell

LewRockwell [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:20 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Rand Clifford: Who Actually Owns BP?

Who Actually Owns BP?

by Rand Clifford [article link](#)

August 22, 2010 | Global Research

Most relevant sources agree that 40% of the shares of BP are held in the United Kingdom, 39% of the shares are held in the United States, while the remaining 21% are held throughout Europe and the rest of the world. The largest single holder of shares is getting harder to track down. Generally an Internet search will lead to the other 9 leaders, roughly 23%:

BlackRock (New York) 5.9%

Legal & General (United Kingdom) 4%

Barclays Global Investor (owned by BlackRock) 3.8%

Norges Bank Investment Management (Norway) 1.8%

Kuwait Investment Authority (manages funds for the Kuwaiti Government) 1.75%

M & G Investment Management (UK asset owned by the Prudential) 1.67%

Standard Life (Scottish insurance company) 1.5%

Capital Research & Management Company (Los Angeles) 1.3%

China's State Administration of Foreign Exchange 1.1%

Too many sites fail to mention who owns a whopping 28.34% of BP—more than the other 9 out of the top 10 together. That would be Wall Street's JPMorgan Chase. And that certainly explains why our own government has offered mostly limp and phony bluster and coverup as BP has done pretty much whatever it wants in our new energy sacrifice zone—such as the deliberate blockage of oil collection in favor of bringing in “Carolina Skiffs” and huge aircraft to spray dispersants at night. BP lies, our government lies and covers, and the Gulf dies. Evidently, our government's top priority is limiting BP's liability.

Nalco is the company that manufactures Corexit dispersant which, despite being banned in the UK because of its toxicity, has been used by the millions of gallons in the Gulf. Corexit has been approved by our EPA—but only for surface use. Well, the EPA illegally issued a permit for BP to inject Corexit at the gushing well head. BP even admitted they used Corexit illegally. They made an enormous catastrophe even much worse by polluting the Gulf with Corexit. Injecting Corexit right at the well head, they created massive plumes of dispersed oil that float around below the surface, killing life

in the Gulf for...long enough. That's what energy sacrifice zones are for; BP greatly reduced its liability by killing the Gulf. Our government tried to convince us that "most" of the oil is miraculously gone—that only 24% remains! Who would have imagined that our own CorpoMedia would be the one to nix that fairy tale, actually telling the truth that 80% of the oil is still in the Gulf, floating around in those dispersed, biocidal plumes? When CorpoMedia controverts CorpoGov, it's obvious that something extraordinary is up. It's called goodbye to life in the Gulf of Mexico. There's a lot of oil and gas down there, and all the Gulf's biology is in the way.

What "Size of People" Are You?

Preliminary work involved in transforming the Gulf of Mexico into an energy sacrifice zone has given BP executives ample opportunity to prove that their mouths are big enough to hold both feet. They have not disappointed. Who can forget CEO Tony Hayward in that sleazy infomercial about how much BP cared—that BP would "...make things right"? It was like Corexit spraying from every TV in America. And of course there was his whining about wanting his life back as he dallied off to a yacht race in UK waters. But perhaps the most telling gaffe came from the Swedish mouth of BP Chairman Carl-Henric Svanberg, right after his meeting with Obama. Svanberg used the term "small people" to refer to those damaged by BP's catastrophe-magnified-with-Corexit. Once wasn't enough, he used it 3 times; the first time saying that President Obama was "...frustrated, because he cares about the small people", then he noted that "We at BP care about the small people", concluding with how much BP "...cares about the small people". Of course he abjectly apologized later for speaking "clumsily", but, hey, Carl-Henric, it's the thought that counts.

So, yes, unfettered capitalism has replaced the sanctity of human life with different "sizes" depending on the amount of moneypower one commands. The vast and rapidly growing majority of us are "small people". From there upward, transparency falls off precipitously, so it's progressively more difficult identifying larger sizes—but there's no stopping conjecture. Perhaps the mediums include our political class, those doing to the smalls what they are told to do. Most millionaires probably belong in this group, maybe even Carl-Henric Svanberg himself. In the large size are the billionaires, as well as many of those behind blacked-out windows being chauffeured to annual Bilderberg meetings. Beyond the large, secrecy becomes so profound it's like lying on the bottom of a stream and trying to spot airplanes cruising by at 40,000 feet. In the X-large and XX-large sizes are surely those who make the final decisions about wars, depressions, and the major energy sacrifice zones. Top multi-national corporations are up in this zone. And it's a safe bet that anyone or anything this high probably ascended on the power of fossil fuels. In 2010, 3 of the 5 largest corporations in the world are: #2, Royal Dutch Shell; #3, Exxon Mobil; #4, BP.

The Actual Costs of Fossil Fuels

This is another realm where transparency gets muddled by secrecy, indirection and lies. But when you start factoring in oil wars, and wars over transfer routes (both currently disguised as wars on terror), you quickly transcend the cost of all the "economically unfeasible" clean and renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, ocean wave, biomass.... Then when you consider things such as pollution, including anthropocentric loading of the atmosphere with heat-trapping gases such as carbon dioxide and methane, fossil energy becomes—perhaps with climate change—terminally expensive. And then there's the social damage of extreme wealth concentration, and attendant commodification and stratification of human life (the different sizes, just like shirts), along with the rapidly growing assembly of energy sacrifice zones—pushed by climate change into possibly including the magnificently-complex life support system of our one and only little blue world...could any energy be more expensive? It seems the answer is no.

Yet we drill and fracture and bulldoze maniacally in our quest to wring out remaining oil, natural gas, and coal that has possibly already killed everything. The answer to the question WHY? would be just another cost of fossil fuel.

The medium, large, X-large and XX-large have proven they will do anything to perpetuate the system that has given them their size. Meanwhile, it appears the only salvation for the vast bulk of humanity, along with most of Earth's species, is in the hands of the small people. We vastly outnumber all other sizes put together, and that leads to one of the scariest questions of all: Just how small are we?

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Sunday, August 22, 2010

[Arshad Khan: Democracy or “Lobbyocracy”?](#)

Democracy or “Lobbyocracy”?

by Arshad Khan [article link](#)

August 22, 2010 | CommonDreams

In July, the SEC fined Goldman-Sachs \$550 million for failing to disclose vital information in selling an investment. But if there were fraud, as alleged, then why not a criminal case? John Paulson at Goldman-Sachs selected packages of mortgage loans that were most likely to fail and bet against them. At the same time, Goldman sold these to clients deceptively as 'least likely to fail', and, as endorsed independently by ACA Capital Management. Goldman is not alone. In all six major lending institutions investigated, there has been evidence of fraud as well as efforts to conceal it, and, so far, not a single criminal case.

Contrast this with the S&L scandal of the eighties when criminal prosecutions were prompt. That debacle was the natural result of deregulating the Savings and Loans. This time it was the banks that were deregulated and Glass-Steagall repealed. Like clockwork these followed the same cycle of greed, fraud, bust, but with a major difference as noted earlier: no criminal prosecutions. So what has changed?

Here is one answer. There are now over 11,000 lobbyists. Hundreds of ex-legislators and their staffers have joined their ranks. Billions are being spent - more than a half-billion already for the impending November election. The University of Kansas recently conducted research on the benefits of lobbying. Here is just one example they unearthed: A group of major corporations spent less than \$300 million in lobbying for a particular tax break. They were successful, saving over \$60 billion in taxes. That is twenty times their investment, and a rate of return almost impossible to achieve in a legitimate business venture by established corporations.

Among the largest contributors, the finance industry stands out, and with it Goldman-Sachs in particular as an active source of cash and personnel. It alone has around fifty lobbyists, both employed directly and also hired through lobbying firms. This forceful and highly effective team includes many prominent former elected US Representatives. It supports Congressmen, Senators, and, especially, members of key committees overseeing the industry. It is also Obama's second highest contributor, \$994,795 according to OpenSecrets.org. Here is a list of personnel it has serving in the higher echelons of the Obama administration.

- * Gary Gensler, Commissioner of Commodity Futures Trading Commission (former GS Partner);
- * Larry Summers is a protege of Bob Rubin a former Chairman of GS and Clinton's Treasury Secretary;
- * Mark Patterson, Geithner's Chief of Staff and the TARP overseer (former GS lobbyist and Vice President for Governmental Relations);
- * Dianna Farrell, Deputy Director, National Economic Council (former GS Financial Analyst);
- * Stephen Friedman, Chairman, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board - Board Member (former GS Chairman 1990-94; Director, 2005);

- * Robert Hormats, Undersecretary for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs, State Department (former Vice-Chairman, GS Group);
- * Philip Murphy, Ambassador to Germany (former Head of GS, Frankfurt); and,
- * John Thain, Advisor to Geithner (former GS President and Chief Operating Officer).

If all of this signifies an exclusive affinity with Democrats, nothing could be further from the truth. Their support and influence is quite secular. Thus Henry Paulson, the Treasury Secretary under George W. Bush, was a former Chairman of - you guessed it - Goldman Sachs. The revolving door syndrome and the spectacular amounts of money involved become evident if we trace the career of just one staffer: Rahm Emanuel, the current White House Chief of Staff left Clinton's White House near the end of their term to work for Wasserstein Parella. He has a B.A. in Liberal Arts and a M.A. in Speech and Communication - no law or business education or experience to contribute. Yet in two and a half years, he was included in eight deals that 'earned' him \$16.2 million. No surprise then that while the President talks about strict controls on the financial giants, behind the scenes lobbying takes on a different tack.

And any wonder that the toothless nematode of a Financial Reform Bill has been the result. Limits on proprietary trading by the big banks recommended even by that old friend of banks, Paul Volcker, have been excluded. Such trading by commercial banks on their own account has been permitted ever since Glass-Steagall was repealed through the energetic exertions of Bob Rubin and Larry Summers. It was without doubt a major cause of our financial disaster and should have been a central feature of the bill. It is not. Even if all of Glass-Steagall is re-introduced, it would affect and proscribe the activities of only about ten major banks. Yet, despite the havoc they, and other involved companies like AIG, have caused no real restraints are proposed. A cursory look at the daisy chain of personalities lifts the veil high enough to note that nothing can change because the incestuous relationships do not permit different ideas. Stellar economists and Nobel Laureates like Stiglitz and Krugman, can shout their heads off - nobody is listening because profits bolstered by the 'free market' (read unregulated) win hands down.

To return to the daisy chain, here is an example. Jamie Dimon, often rumored to be the next Treasury Secretary, is a close friend of Secretary Geithner who is then expected to rotate to a bank. Mr. Dimon is the current head of J.P. Morgan-Chase. Prior to that he was at Citigroup as the favored protege of Sanford Weill and rumored to be the next CEO until trouble brewed. Mr. Rubin, a former chairman of Goldman-Sachs and a mentor to Tim Geithner, found a home at Citi after finishing his tenure at Treasury. And so it goes on.

The sad fact remains. We were presented the best opportunity for change (in a couple of decades) by the financial collapse but failed to seize it. Nothing can change, it seems, because a dependent President with no base, and no existing structure as, for example, a powerful former governor might have, is forced to use the scaffolding, already in place, constructed by the power bases in the Democratic Party.

Much worse have been the accusations against the Clintons. The Keiser Report accuses Hillary of "look-back" trading. It can be used as a scheme to transfer money secretly from one person to another and works like this: Two commodity trading accounts are opened. Each day simultaneous buy and sell orders are executed. When the trades are closed, the winning trade is assigned to the account to which money is being transferred. Hillary Clinton made \$100,000, starting with \$1000, in a commodity trading account over a 10-month period, at a time when her husband's salary was in the low thirties and they were desperate for money. There has never been an adequate explanation why with such extraordinary commodity trading skills, she stopped trading shortly thereafter. Most amateur commodity traders - almost 80% by some estimates - lose their stake within a few months.

Bill Clinton signed in the Commodity Futures Modernization Act in December 2000 just before leaving office. Steered through by Rubin, Summers, Geithner et al, it, among other relaxations, excluded Credit Default Swaps from regulation. The secret unregulated (a far cry from a regulated open market) trading in these yielded enormous profits until greed overtook common sense. Then the government bailout. Since Bill Clinton left office, he has accumulated over a \$100 million, half in speaking fees - paid to a man noted for disputing the meaning of 'is' in a deposition. Perhaps it is appropriate to quote the well-known journalist, Christopher Hitchens (no darling of the left himself, yet not a conservative, and one who, like the Clintons, supported the Iraq war) who states in a recent interview in the New Statesman, "Clinton could change his mind on any issue, but couldn't change the fact that he was a scumbag."

Then there is the special relationship Hillary and Bill maintain with Haim Saban, the billionaire entertainment mogul who is obsessed with a biblical prospect for Israel. If you have been wondering whatever happened to the relatively neutral Middle East analysis from Brookings. Well, in 2002, the \$13 million dollar - largest gift in Brookings history - Saban Center for Middle East Policy happened; in addition, Saban has doled out \$5 million to Bill Clinton's library, untold millions through his group of deep pockets for Hillary's presidential campaign, \$7 million for the Democrats' National Committee, etc. Like the bankers, his is the voice that does not cry in the wilderness.

So, who cares if a family's home is foreclosed, or one in five are unemployed, or one in four children live in poverty, or the Gulf has vast dead zones, or that now, after the Israeli blockade, the World Health Organization reports almost half of the children in Gaza are anemic and stunted. Sadly, not our government. We have entered a new phase in our democracy, an era where elected officials no longer need to respond to the needs of the general public ... just the minority who pay to play.

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On the Way Down

The Erosion of America's Middle Class

By Thomas Schulz [article link](#) [article link](#)

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The New Normal: A Lot Like Now Only Worse

By Chaz Valenza [article link](#)

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Saturday, August 21, 2010

Giordano Bruno: The Purpose Behind Engineered Economic Collapse

The Purpose Behind Engineered Economic Collapse

by Giordano Bruno [article link](#) [article link](#)

08/17/2010 | Neithercorp Press | Silver Bear Cafe

"From now on, depressions will be scientifically created." - Congressman Charles A. Lindbergh Sr. , 1913

Everyone loves money. Even people like myself who abhor the abuse of money and commerce, who understand the fraudulent nature of the system we live in, still work hard and save so that we might attain a sense of stability within that system. Many people see money as a focal point to their existence. But is it really money that they are after, or is it something else entirely? In truth, money represents 'security' in the minds of the masses. Money affords us the ability to survive, and the more of it we have, the safer we all feel. Because we subconsciously associate the extension of our very life with the variable health of the economic structure in which we live, we tend to become unwitting devotees to its continued existence, even if it is corrupt and condemned to failure. We gullibly deny the system or the currency that supports it is doomed to the contrary of all evidence because, even though it has beaten us bloody, we have never known anything else.

In light of this entrenched way of perceiving things, especially in the U.S., it is difficult enough to convince some people that the economy is in fact not providing the security they desire, but is actually destroying their future completely. To explain to them that this is deliberate, that the economy is designed to self-destruct, that is another prospect altogether.

Many people hit a proverbial wall on this issue because they simply cannot fathom that certain groups of men (globalists and central bankers) view money and economy in completely different terms than they do. The average American lives within a tiny box when it comes to the mechanics and motivations of finance. They think that their monetary desires and drives are exactly the same as a globalist's. But, what they don't realize is that the box they think in was BUILT by globalists. This is why the actions of big banks and the decisions of our mostly corporate establishment run government seem so insane in the face of common sense. We try to rationalize their behavior as "idiocy", but the reality is that their goals are highly deliberate and so far outside what we have been taught to expect that some of us lack a point of reference. If you cannot see the endgame, you will not understand the steps taken to reach it until it is too late.

In the past we have covered numerous instances in which global bankers have admitted to fraud on a massive scale, fraud which is now crushing our already fragile economy. We have covered the private Federal Reserve and how it knowingly facilitated the creation of the housing bubble, as well as how it is now inflating a Treasury bubble which is soon to implode. We have covered Goldman Sachs and its efforts to promote and sell toxic derivatives all over the world while at the same time betting against those derivatives on the open market. We have covered the manipulation of gold and silver markets by companies like JP Morgan, which have recently been exposed by whistleblowers and GATA investigations. And, most importantly, we have executed in-depth analysis on the growing weakness of the U.S. dollar in preparation for severe currency devaluation. These revelations raise questions, which is natural, but they also illicit misconceptions and reckless knee-jerk reactions, especially when broaching the fact that the illegal strategies of international banks are part of a greater agenda.

Below, we will examine some of the most common narrow minded responses to the issue of engineered economic collapse, as well as why people think the way they do when the "semi-sacred" subject of money is involved...

1. The economy is too complex to be controlled by just a handful of people...

This response often comes from people who make presumptions on economics, rather than actually educating themselves on how the system works. From the outside looking in, the world of finance appears chaotic; a mixture of mathematical and legal standards swirling in a void of mass psychology. Many Americans are either frightened off by the seemingly complicated field of study, or they find it rather boring and not worth their time. This, however, does not stop them from assuming that they know how money works.

The problem is that just because a person participates in his economy daily, it does not mean he has any understanding of how it operates. Many watch television on a daily basis, but few have any idea how the picture actually gets onto the screen, or how to fix a television once it is broken. Sadly, our egocentric culture has led a substantial portion of the public to imagine that they are experts on EVERYTHING, and thus, true researchers in the fields of economics and globalism get reactions like the one above constantly.

At bottom, once all the quasi-technical biz-babble used by mainstream talking heads is removed from the equation, economics is rather simple. Supply and Demand will always be at the center of any and every economy, regardless of the political atmosphere it exists in. These two fundamental factors can be manipulated to a point, by the creation of artificial supply, or the conjuring of false demand. This is achieved in many ways by global bankers, but primarily through domination of the issuance of currency, the ability to change interest rates at will, as well as the ability to inject or remove incredible sums of money from any market.

A perfect example is the suppression of silver prices by JP Morgan: [article link](#)

Gold and silver represent competing currencies to the fiat dollars created by the Federal Reserve, and suppressing the value of these commodities helps to ensure that the public will never see them as a viable alternative to paper assets. JP Morgan, who along with other international banks has the ability to throw around massive quantities of capital wherever they please,

suppresses the value of physical silver by issuing paper securities for silver that doesn't actually exist (creating an artificially high supply), and naked short selling silver markets to drive them lower (creating the false impression of low demand).

Another good example of economic manipulation is the private Federal Reserve's strategy during the 90's under Alan Greenspan to artificially lower interest rates, allowing banks to issue credit at historical levels for over a decade. Linked below is an article from Ron Paul's 'Texas Straight Talk' dated March, 2007, before the housing market even began its full swan-dive. In it, he discusses the Federal Reserve's direct role in the creation of the housing bubble: [article link](#)

Men like Ron Paul, Peter Schiff, Gerald Celente, Jim Rogers, and many others were able to predict long before hand that the Federal Reserve's actions were creating an explosive mortgage and credit bubble, yet, we are supposed to believe that the Federal Reserve had "no idea" that their actions would result in a debt implosion?

Catherine Austin Fitts, former Assistant Secretary of Housing and Commissioner of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the first Bush Administration stated conversely that the mortgage bubble was absolutely not an accident, and that she had witnessed outright and deliberate fraud on the part of the U.S. government and the Federal Reserve Bank in creating the bubble. The fact that disturbed her most, however, was her discovery that only a small handful of international banks were responsible for the perpetuation of toxic mortgage debt, not just in America, but around the world: [article link](#)

Goldman Sachs (one of the primary globalist banks involved in the igniting of the debt crisis) was caught red-handed selling toxic derivatives to investors and governments all over the planet while at the same time betting against those derivatives on the market. Goldman even bet against mortgage securities the bank itself created! [article link](#)

This is sort of similar to a car maker selling vehicles without brake lines, then placing bets that their clients will crash and burn. Essentially, it is blatant and sociopathic fraud! Goldman's actions directly contributed to credit collapses in numerous countries, including Greece, and here in the U.S.

The idea that global banks can turn the economy on and off like a light switch may be a stretch, but the vast majority of evidence shows that they do have the ability to shift the direction of markets to a point, as well as the ability to spur the growth of bubbles that eventually lead to recessions, depressions, and beyond. In fact, if one examines the U.S. economy from the inception of the Federal Reserve in 1913, they would find that the past century has been nothing but a series of engineered equity bubbles designed to slowly hobble, but not completely cripple, our financial system and our currency, at least, until recently. Like a steam locomotive on a collision course with a bottomless canyon, globalist banks can slow or speed up the pace of our descent, but the final destination never changes.

Now that we have established that market collapses can be created by a small handful of bankers and done knowingly, lets move on to the next most common sheeple-like talking point.

2. Yes, international banks triggered the meltdown, but the "greed of Capitalism" is truly to blame (i.e. Its all the Republican Party's fault)...

First off, if you're parroting the fiscal debate points of two dimensional socialist gatekeepers like Michael Moore, then you're already hopelessly lost in the mind warping hedge maze of the false left/right paradigm. You should stay as far away as possible from adult conversations on economics, especially if you plan on associating the "greed" of capitalism and corporatism with the Republican Party alone.

News Flash! Barack Obama received far more in corporate campaign donations (including donations from BP and Exxon) than McCain did. Both Bush Jr. and Obama increased government spending to record levels meaning Neo-Conservatives are in no way "conservative" (as a true Republican is supposed to be). Obama has consistently surrounded himself with banksters and corporate lobbyists, including various hobgoblins from the bowels of Goldman Sachs. BOTH major parties are owned and operated by global banks. This is a cold hard undeniable truth of our political system. There is no way around it. Learn it, accept it as reality, and stop trying to blame one side or the other for problems that both sides created! If

you cannot do this, your view of our cultural state of affairs will always be horribly skewed and your insights on our social problems will be utterly worthless.

While wannabe socialists desperately clamor to point fingers at the free market ideology as the cause of all our ills, the fact is that none of us have ever lived in a truly free market system. Since the inception of the Federal Reserve in 1913, all markets and even our own currency have become more and more vulnerable to manipulation by the banking elite. We have lived our entire lives in a rigged market, not a free market. To blame the very concept of Capitalism for our current dire circumstances is not only naïve, it is dangerous. Globalists would like nothing better than to promote the illusion that "too much freedom" led us to this disaster, and that severe controls must be put into place to ensure that it "never happens again".

3. Global banks would never engineer the collapse of the U.S. economy or the Dollar. It makes them too much money...

This often heard song and dance ties in with the number two comment above. Again, the assumption is that the globalists only do what they do out of an "uncontrollable greed for money". This perpetuates a couple fallacies. First, it encourages the false belief that the end concern for the Elite is the accumulation of riches. Central bankers have the ability to PRINT all the money they want from thin air! Remember, the Federal Reserve has never been subjected to a full audit, meaning they could easily create billions if not trillions without any oversight whatsoever. Greed for money, to them, is surely an absurd notion. What they do want, more than anything else, is social power. They want control over every living human being without question. All other concerns are secondary.

The next fallacy underlying the above argument is the conjecture that the U.S. economy is somehow indispensable to global banks. This is simply not so. Where we see the economy as an extension of our culture and ourselves, the Elites see financial systems as mere tools in the pursuit of a greater goal: World Government. Imagine you are building a house. Once your saw has fulfilled its intended role of cutting the wood, do you cling to it, or do you throw it aside and pick up a hammer? This is how globalists look at financial systems. They are perfectly willing to cast off the U.S. economy like a snake shedding skin if it brings them closer to attaining their ultimate aim.

The same goes for the Dollar. The Greenback may be the premier world reserve currency now, but that can and likely will change very quickly over the next couple years. The Dollar is a device that has outlived its usefulness as far as global bankers are concerned. The IMF has on several occasions made it clear that they eventually intend for the SDR (Special Drawing Rights) to replace the Dollar as the world reserve currency, and they have openly admitted that it will one day be established as a global currency. IMF press releases make this development sound far off and away, but SDR accumulations by countries around the world have risen dramatically in the past year. This along with other factors we will cover (namely China's preparations to dump their U.S. T-bond holdings) show that IMF actions indicate they are preparing for a collapse of the Dollar now!

4. China would never dump U.S. Treasuries because it would hurt them as much as it hurts us...

The theory that China is somehow fused to the U.S. in a kind of symbiotic seesaw relationship that can never be broken is so ingrained among mainstream American financial analysts it simply will not die, regardless of how much contradictory evidence you show them. It really is like a mental disease which causes MSM pundits to go into involuntary Tourette convulsions every time you mention the words "Treasury bond dump". America and China are not conjoined twins, and one can survive without the other. We have covered the China issue over and over again, and I will not rehash all that evidence here. To lay it out simply: China has re-engineered its economy towards consumption and importation rather than relying on exports. The IMF has talked about this on many occasions with apparent excitement: [article link](#)

China has also finalized the ASEAN trading bloc which has combined export markets at least equal to that of the U.S. Meaning, China already has another place to send its exports besides America.

Most importantly, China must increase their currency's value if their new consumer based system is to survive. Allowing the Yuan to rise sharply in value will revitalize the buying power of the Chinese populace making greater consumption possible. Indeed, China MUST dump their Treasury holdings and pump up the Yuan if they are to hold their economy together. And, the Federal Reserve has given China every reason to turn its back on Treasuries through never ending liquidity injections. This is not to say that a U.S. collapse will not affect them, it would negatively affect the entire world. However, China has positioned itself to survive, and perhaps even thrive with their economic expansions into Africa, and their new financial agreements with Germany.

Finally, the Chinese have been very forthcoming over the past week about plans to drop Treasuries. China has dumped over 7.7% of their U.S. T-Bond holdings since January, including the biggest T-bond dump on record this month. They have openly admitted to a plan to diversify away from the Dollar: [article link](#)

I'm always fascinated by those economists who vehemently deny China will ever turn away from the U.S. Dollar while they are doing so right in plain view. Are MSM analysts simply crazy? I don't know, but it would explain a lot...

5. Sure, bankers took advantage, but it's really the American people's fault for getting suckered...

Yes, a sizable portion of the American public can be gut wrenchingly stupid. It hurts my head and my feelings to see people act so idiotic, it really does. The problem with this argument though is that when it is taken too far it becomes an attempt to divert blame away from the criminals and place it on the victims. If you knowingly leave your front door unlocked in a bad neighborhood and you find your home ransacked the next day, then you are partly responsible. But, we cannot forget that the neighborhood is "bad" in the first place because of the criminals, not the people who don't lock their doors.

Just because global banks can sucker the public doesn't mean they should, or that they cannot be judged for it. The crime ultimately rests on those men who made the conscious effort to destroy this country, and the blame rests with them as well. I see the attempt to parlay the economic collapse into the lap of the American people very often lately, especially from bankers who now claim that it's the American public's fault entirely. Why? Because they will not spend more, they will not take on more debt, they will not take on more risk, and they will not believe hard enough in the recovery that never was. Imagine a serial rapist behind a podium admonishing women for carrying pepper spray. It's eerily similar...

6. Ok, maybe the banks are causing a collapse, but to say the government is helping them is just crazy conspiracy theory...

Why is it that the Federal Reserve has never been fully audited? Why is it that when Ron Paul tried to pass HR 1207 Federal Reserve Transparency Bill, it was muddled in committees and then eventually derailed? Why is it that banks like Goldman Sachs have been caught, yes caught, setting the stage for an economic implosion in this country, yet no government indictments have been formed to criminally prosecute them? Why are these men still roaming free like locusts to continue pillaging at will? Are we supposed to feel lucky that we get table scraps like Bernie Madoff behind bars while the Federal Reserve commits Ponzi fraud on a scale that dwarfs his?

Our government, both major parties, is owned lock stock and barrel. This is why there are no satisfactory answers for the questions posed above. Elements of the U.S. Government including almost every president since 1912 have not only turned a blind eye to Globalist activities, they have offered their full support to the bankers.

Nixon removed the Dollar from the gold standard in 1971 giving the Fed free reign to print as much fiat as they wished without limitations. In 1980 the Depository Institutions Deregulation and Monetary Control Act was passed placing all banks essentially under the rules of the Federal Reserve. The Glass-Steagall Act which kept investment banks and depository banks separate was repealed under a Republican majority in the Senate, and then finalized by Democratic President Bill Clinton in 1999. 30 years ago, banks that held your home mortgage were for the most part required to keep that mortgage until it was finally paid. But, a series of government decisions spanning that period and influenced by global banks allowed for the "securitization" of mortgages, leading to the creation of "derivatives", which were then used by corporate mobsters like Goldman Sachs to destroy our financial system. Last, but certainly not least, both the Bush and Obama Administrations pressured Congress into passing highly unpopular bailout legislation which basically rewarded the

same banks that created the credit crisis with trillions in taxpayer dollars (yes, the bailouts are now actually in the trillions, not billions). This led to the coining of the term "too big to fail" (or "too big to jail"). Our Government has been nothing but complicit in the banker takeover of this country. To debate otherwise is to invite embarrassment.

I haven't even scratched the surface of government involvement in the collapse of our economy. Cases like the Savings and Loan crisis of the 1980's led to serious prosecutions and jail time for more than 1100 criminal bankers, but this only caused the government to respond by changing investigation rules to make it even more difficult to catch the high level fraudsters in the act! Linked below is an interview between Max Keiser and bank regulator Prof. William K Black who outlines our government's complicity in the breakdown of the country it is mandated to protect: [video link](#)

Elites destroy cultures to make way for new philosophies; their philosophies. Its not so much "conspiracy theory" as it is a widely admitted methodology. Corporate globalists believe in global government on their terms and they barely try to hide it. If someone thinks this sounds "fantastical" then they haven't been paying the slightest attention. When one understands how Elites view economy, and realizes their primary motivations, the fact that they purposely triggered a collapse is perfectly logical. Nothing besides all out war inspires more fear and desperation in a society than a financial upheaval. Such elements on a mass scale allow changes in our collective psychology that were never possible before. Most people tend to falter under such an overwhelming threat and turn towards any authority (or fake authority) to save them from harm. Some people scoff at this idea, but it is likely they have never actually been in the wake of a real national catastrophe before. Men, especially those who know little of themselves, can change quickly in the face of calamity. The Elites recognize this, engineer tragedy, then waltz into the aftermath to merrily lord over the rubble.

Will their plan work? I think not, but I'm an optimist (no, really). The pursuit of total control and total power seems rather infantile to me, be it on an impressively psychotic level. Although, if we are made to forget who the real enemy is, then I think they do have a chance at success. That is how they have remained successful to this point. Only now does the average man have such immense knowledge at his fingertips, the knowledge to bring down a line of despots and tyrants that have reigned for centuries. If only the average man was not so easily deterred by WMD's (Weapons of Mass Distraction). The Elites will likely ignite some wars, tempt us into in-fighting, and fabricate enemies like Al Qaeda out of the ether. As the slogan goes, "Order Out Of Chaos". Whatever happens, our eyes must remain fixed on the root of the problem; the bankers, and nothing else.

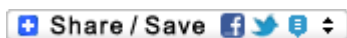
Globalists are not invincible, they are not untouchable, they are not even all that brilliant. They are human, and they have made many mistakes. The engineering of an economic meltdown really changes nothing. Hired thugs, useful idiots, corrupt officials, even hyperinflation, all tiny obstacles when considering the world we could have if the Elites were finally made to face the reckoning they deserve. Americans once took on the greatest empire on Earth. We once took a feared king to task. Are a bunch of frothing corporate bankers really so daunting? All that is needed is a principled movement with the will to see justice done, and I believe we have that already.

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Friday, August 20, 2010

John Kozy: Why the Wars can't be Won

Why the Wars can't be Won

by Prof. John Kozy [article link](#)

August 20, 2010 | Global Research

Edmund Burke's statement, "Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it" is frequently cited, but in truth, even history's obvious lessons are unrecognized by many who know history very well.

There was a time when every school child could recite the Gettysburg Address from memory, especially its famous peroration: "we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth." But that resolution has largely gone unfulfilled. So exactly what did the Civil War accomplish?

Most certainly, it preserved the union territorially and abolished slavery—two noteworthy things. But the slaves who were freed, rather than being benefited by their freedom, were left in the lurch, and the prejudicial attitudes of Confederate whites were most likely hardened; they certainly were not softened. So although the war united the nation territorially, it failed to unite its peoples, and that division is still evident today.

After the 2004 Presidential election, The Dallas Morning News ran a feature about this division titled Beyond the Red and Blue. Using the red states that went to President Bush and the blue states that went to Senator Kerry, it pointed out how red and blue states ranked in various categories.

People in red states are less healthy than those in blue states.
People in red states earn less than those in blue states.
People in red states are less educated than those in blue states.
More people in red states live in mobile homes than those in blue states.
The red states have higher birth rates among teens than the blue states.
More people are killed by guns in the red states than in the blue states.

And the Dallas Morning News missed a number of other inferior attributes of the red states.

The red states have higher rates of poverty, both generally and among the elderly, higher rates of crime, both general and violent, have higher rates of infant mortality and divorce, and have fewer physicians per unit of population than do the blue states.

These statistics do not paint a pretty picture. And since the red states are commonly referred to as the conservative heartland, one would think that the people who live in these states would vote against conservative candidates merely on the basis of their own rational, self interests. But they don't.

There's an obvious clash here, for the red states are the home of that group that calls itself "moral America." But how can a moral viewpoint countenance poverty, crime, and infant mortality? What kind of morality is it that doesn't care for the welfare of people? Just what moral maxim guides the lives of these people? Certainly not the Golden Rule, the Decalogue, or the Second Commandment of Christ. From what I have been able to gather, moral America needs a new moral code. The one it has is, to use a word the members of this group dislike, relative.

So what motivates the conservative nature of the people in the red states? Let's look at some history.

For a century after the Civil War, the south voted Democratic, but not because the people shared any values in common with the rest of the nation's Democrats. (Southerners even distinguished themselves from other Democrats by calling themselves "Dixiecrats.") These people were Democrats merely because the political party of the war and reconstruction

was Republican. And when, in the mid-twentieth century, the Democratic Party championed an end to racial discrimination, these life-long Democrats quickly became Republicans, because the Republican party had in the intervening years become reactionary.

What motivates these people even today, though most likely they don't recognize it, is an unwillingness to accept the results of the Civil War and change the attitudes held before it. When a society inculcates beliefs over a long period of time, those beliefs cannot be changed by a forceful imposition of others. The beliefs once practiced overtly continue to be held covertly. Force is never an effective instrument of conversion. Martyrdom is preferable to surrender, and even promises of a better future are ineffective.

So what did the Civil War really accomplish? It united a nation without uniting its people. The United States of America became one nation indivisible made up of two disunited peoples; it became a nation divided, and the division has spread.

Therein lies a lesson all nations should have learned. By the force of arms, you can compel outward conformity to political institutions and their laws, but you cannot change the antagonistic attitudes of people, that can remain unchanged for decades and longer waiting for opportunities to reassert themselves.

Any astute reader can apply this lesson to the present day's activities in the Middle East. Neither force nor promises of a future better than the past can win the hearts and minds of people. And soldiers who die in an attempt to change another people's values always die in vain.

All wars, even when carried on by the strongest of nations against weak opponents, are chancy, and their costs, in every respect, are always much more than anticipated, even putting aside the physical destruction and the lives lost.

Nations that have started wars with the psychological certainty of winning rarely have, and when they have, the results were rarely lasting or those sought. As Gandhi once observed, "Victory attained by violence is tantamount to a defeat, for it is momentary."

The Crusaders, fighting under the banner of Christ, could not make Palestine a part of Christendom. France, under Napoleon, conquered most of Europe but lost it all and Napoleon ended up a broken man. Prussian militarism prevailed in the Franco-Prussian War, but in less than a century Germany had lost all. The Austrians in 1914 could not only not subdue the Serbs, the empire and its monarchical form of government were lost. The Germans and Japanese after 1939 and astounding initial successes were reduced to ruin.

But even the winners are losers.

Americans won the Mexican War and acquired the southwestern United States, but that conquest brought with it unfathomable and persistent problems—racial prejudice, discrimination, and an irresolvable problem of immigration and border insecurity. Americans likewise won the falsely justified Spanish American war and acquired a number of colonial states but were unable to hold most of them. The allies won the Second World War, but France and England lost the colonies they were fighting to preserve, and these two powers, which were great before the war, were reduced to minor status (although both still refuse to admit it). Israel has won five wars against various Arab states since 1948, but its welfare and security have not been enhanced, and Arab hatred and intransigence has grown more common.

People need to realize that after a war, things are never the same as they were before, and that even the winners rarely get what they fight for. War is a fool's errand in pursuit of ephemera.

At the end of World War II, American leaders wrongly assumed that America's superpower status gave it the means to impose its view of what the world should be like on others everywhere. Then came Korea and the assumption proved false. Despite all of the destruction and death inflicted on the North Koreans, their attitudes went unchanged. The lesson went unlearned. It went unlearned again in Viet Nam, after which Henry Kissinger is reported to have naively said, "I could not believe that a primitive people had no breaking point." The Vietnamese never broke. Now again Americans are foolishly

assuming that the peoples of the Middle East will change their attitudes if enough force is imposed for a long enough time and enough promises of a better future are made. History belies this assumption.

Unfortunately, history teaches its lessons to only those willing to learn, and the American oligarchy shows no signs of having such willingness.

So let's start singing bye-bye, Miss American Pie
Warring is nothing but a bad way to die!

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John Kozy is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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War Without End?

by: Alexander Cockburn [article link](#)
20 August 2010 | t r u t h o u t | Op-Ed
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Medea Benjamin: The Iraq Legacy

The Iraq Legacy: Tell It Like It Is

by Medea Benjamin [article link](#)
August 20, 2010 | CommonDreams

With the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraq, the administration, the military and the media are trying to put a positive spin on this grim chapter of U.S. history. It would certainly give some comfort to the grieving families of the over 4,400 soldiers killed in Iraq if their sacrifices had left Iraq a better place or made America safer. But the bitter truth is that the U.S. intervention has been an utter disaster for both Iraq and the United States.

First let's acknowledge that we should have never attacked Iraq to begin with. Iraq had no connection with our 9/11 attackers, had no weapons of mass destruction and represented no threat to the United States. We were pushed into this war on the basis of lies and no one--not George Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Karl Rove, Donald Rumsfeld--has been held accountable. The "think tanks," journalists and pundits who perpetuated the lies have not been fired. Most of them can be found today cheerleading for the war in Afghanistan.

It's true that Iraqis suffered under the brutal rule of Saddam Hussein but his overthrow did not lead to a better life for Iraqis. "I am not a political person, but I know that under Saddam Hussein, we had electricity, clean drinking water, a healthcare system that was the envy of the Arab world and free education through college," Iraqi pharmacist Dr. Entisar Al-Arabi told me. "I have five children and every time I had a baby, I was entitled to a year of paid maternity leave. I owned a pharmacy and I could close up shop as late as I chose because the streets were safe. Today there is no security and Iraqis have terrible shortages of everything--electricity, food, water, medicines, even gasoline. Most of the educated people have fled the country, and those who remain look back longingly to the days of Saddam Hussein."

Dr. Al-Arabi has joined the ranks of the nearly four million Iraqi refugees, many of whom are now living in increasingly desperate circumstances in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and around the world. Undocumented, most are not allowed to work and are forced to take extremely low paying, illegal jobs or rely on the UN and charities to survive. The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) has reported a disturbing spike in the [sex trafficking of Iraqi women](#).

The Iraq war has left a terrible toll on our troops. Over 4,400 have been killed and tens of thousands severely injured. [More than one in four U.S. troops](#) have come home from the Iraq war with health problems that require medical or mental health treatment. "PTSD rates have skyrocketed and in 2009, a record number of 245 soldiers committed suicide," said Geoff Millard, chair of the board of Iraq Veterans Against the War. "If vets coming home from Iraq don't get treated, we will see a rise in homelessness, drug abuse, alcoholism and domestic violence."

It has also drained our treasury and contributed to the present financial crisis. As of August 2010, U.S. taxpayers have spent over \$750 billion on the Iraq war. Counting the cost of lifetime care for wounded vets and the interest payments on the money we borrowed to pay for this war, the real cost will be in the trillions. This money could have been used to invest in clean, green jobs, or to rebuild our nation's schools, healthcare and infrastructure-ensuring real security for Americans.

In addition to harming our troops and economy, the war has deeply tarnished our reputation. The US policy of torture, extraordinary rendition, indefinite detention, violent and deadly raids on civilian homes, gunning down innocent civilians in the streets and absence of habeas corpus has fueled the fires of hatred and extremism toward Americans. The very presence of our troops in Iraq and other Muslim nations has become a recruiting tool.

And let's not forget that our presence in Iraq is far from over. There will still be 50,000 troops left behind, some 75,000 private contractors, five huge "enduring bases" and an embassy the size of Vatican City. As Major General Stephen Lanza, the US military spokesman in Iraq, told the New York Times: ["In practical terms, nothing will change"](#).

So let us mark this moment with a deep sense of shame for the suffering we have brought to Iraqis and American military families, and a deep sense of shame that our democracy has been unable to hold accountable those responsible for this debacle.

The lessons of this disastrous intervention should serve as an impetus for Congress and the administration to end the quagmire in Afghanistan. It's time to end these unwinnable, unjustifiable wars and bring our war dollars home to tackle the most strategic task for our national security, i.e. rebuilding America.

You can join the coalition calling for accountability by signing up [here](#).

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Iraq: Torture. Corruption. Civil war. America has Certainly Left Its Mark

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What Will Become of Us, of Americans, If We Continue on This Path?

by Lorraine Berry [article link](#)

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Why WikiLeaks Must Be Protected

The case of the Afghanistan war logs and the hounding of Julian Assange prove that there's never been greater need to speak truth to power than today.

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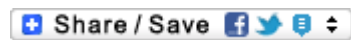
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By Robert Parry [article link](#)

August 20, 2010 | OpEdNews

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Thursday, August 19, 2010

[Robert Wolff: Is There An Alternative To Constant Economic Growth?](#)

Is there an alternative to constant economic growth?

By Robert Wolff [article link](#)

August 18, 2010 | OpEdNews

Americans, and perhaps others as well, have become so used to thinking that growth is a necessity for a healthy economy that alternatives are impossible to imagine. We don't even have a word for not growing, or growing down. We lack the words to have a dialogue about the fact that on this planet indefinite growth is an impossibility. Even the warmth and light (energy) we get from the sun is not indefinite and varies all the time. Nothing on this earth grows without eventually dying. It is obvious but perhaps difficult to accept, that life is not possible without death. Does it not follow then that even in a manmade concept such as "the economy" there cannot be continuing growth. Yes, the human population of the planet is still growing, but on closer examination it is clear that it is now growing much less than ten or twenty years ago, and the present growth is more from people living longer than from more babies being born. There is an end to population growth. Demographers compute the end at somewhere between nine and ten billion people -- the current number of people is estimated to be close to seven billion. Within countries population growth is influenced not only by more, or less births than deaths but also by immigration and emigration. Economists and especially politicians assume a continuing growth of the population of the US, therefore requiring a continually growing economy. Figures I have seen, and therefore known by economists and even politicians show that during the last ten or more years the economy has kept up with population growth, but only if counting total incomes. Closer examination of those figures shows that income of the so-called "middle class" actually went down and the very richest 2% has gained enormously.

I do not understand much of the relationship between money, production, and consumption. Economists clearly do not agree on economic theories. Some economists say it is not possible to grow without increasing production, others say we must increase consumption even if what we consume is imported because we don't make much any more in this country except arms. But what exactly is measured when the experts measure growth? Is it how much we buy, how much we earn, how much the country's economy expands? Or is it an esoteric formula that puts all those and other factors together.

There is an organization, originating in Quebec, I believe, called *Décroissance Conviviale*. The organization spread to French speaking countries in Western Europe, and there was an attempt to get something going in the US, using a literal translation of the original: Convivial Degrowth. The French *décroissance* is an existing word, meaning un-growing, growing down, not growing but lessening -- but the concept is obviously so strange to English speakers that there is no word for it. We are so certain that growth can go on forever that we do not have a nice word like convivial for the opposite of growth. The American economy is based solidly on the idea that the economy can, must, ought to grow forever.

I cannot even imagine that anyone who knows anything about this planet can seriously accept the idea that something, anything, on this planet could grow forever. Growth without the balance of dying is an impossibility.

It is now mid-summer 2010. The American economy is stagnant to use a nice word, not growing in any case. The President now and then gives a cheerful talk that there were some new jobs created last month, carefully not mentioning that more jobs were lost. The Republicans, and apparently the heads of the G20 countries, decided that we must tighten our belts because everybody has debts. Enormous debts because we were told it was a matter of life and death that the banks would

be paid for their losses and, although nobody ever mentions that when talking about money, we are fighting two extremely expensive wars. As a result of our government's magnanimity last year the big banks and other financial institutions had their best year ever, double digit profits, huge bonuses. Now the banks are sitting on their money, holding onto trillions of dollars or whatever currency they hold money in. True, interest rates are low, but if they were higher nobody would buy bonds, and then the US (and probably other governments) could not pay their bills because they must rely on borrowing money to operate at all.

I try to understand economics, money, but it is beyond my capacity to understand. What's worse is that I have a suspicion that nobody else quite understands what is going on either. Economists are disagreeing with each other, often for political reasons more than economic "science" if there is such a thing as a science of economy.

What would a world, or a nation, look like whose economy is not expected to grow forever? Not hard to imagine. That is how most of the world's people lived sixty years ago. We always lived sustainably naturally. Of course. We would not have survived otherwise. First we were hunter/gatherers, finding food where it grows naturally, leaves, roots, fruit. Building shelter with what we found around us, bamboo in the tropics, blocks of ice or snow in the arctic. In deserts we sought shade from trees. On low islands we found food in the lagoon. The greatest talent of humans was that we could adapt to an amazing variety of environments. First People for a long time were nomads, they never stressed any environment more than it could carry. We knew not to eat the whole plant, but leave some to grow back for next year. But even First Man knew greed: scientists think we eradicated the Mammoth, killing much more than we could possibly eat or use. And one kind of human eradicated another kind of human over a period estimated at 40,000 years -- Cro Magnon Man, our fore-parents, eradicated Neanderthal Man. We don't know why. There are a few hints that we may have cross bred. In any case the more aggressive kind of humans survived.

Then, perhaps ten thousand years ago (a short time compared to the time we have existed) we invented staying in one place, which meant we had to force more plants to grow to support us, domesticate animals that could be domesticated for food and free labor. We controlled nature, but slowly, softly, we learned how far we could go. What we now call indigenous people all over the world developed different but sustainable life styles. Rice growers made terraces to control water and sustained the same life style for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. It was hard work, but it worked. They grew what they needed to eat, they made what tools they needed, they built shelter from what was around or what they could make with what they found around them.

The industrial Revolution changed humankind. We were great inventors but very poor visionaries or planners. We did not foresee what the steam engine, or the telegraph, would do to change the way we live, or think. Even now we don't foresee how, for instance, genetically manipulated plants and animals will work out twenty years from now. Looking back twenty years we now know that many of the supposedly scientific advances turned out to be dangerous or poisonous and always had unsuspected consequences. Because now we rush ahead, anything and everything we dream up has to make money immediately. When we began to ruthlessly, without foresight, plunder the earth of what we now call resources, our world became unsustainable. For too long we allowed the powerful to steal from the less powerful and so doing not only eradicated cultures, rain forests, and rivers, but endangered the planetary ecology which is what allows us to live on this planet.

Our history is remarkably thin about how we used to live, but we know there were empires four or five thousand years ago. The latest empire, ours, seems to be trying to survive the usual few hundred years by at least a presence all over the world, guarding current and future resources we need to drive our extremely wasteful, unsustainable culture. Americans use twice as much electricity per person as, for instance, Europeans. Modern humankind uses five times what the planet can and does provide in the form of energy, food, water, breathable air. To continue our life style we would need five planets but we have only one.

We badly need to ungrow, not grow. We need to live much simpler lives, smaller more efficient homes, no cars or much more efficient smaller cars. We need not only better health care, but more simple healthcare that can catch chronic diseases before they become chronic and then very expensive to treat. We need less rather than more. Somehow we must learn to adapt to what there is again. We knew how for thousands of years, now we think we must adapt the planet to our wants. Obviously a foolish impossibility.

One of the peculiar aspects of American culture is our denial of other people's ways. There are quite a few countries in Europe, South America, Asia, that live very close to sustainably and yet have many of the gadgets we have, their people are happier than we are, live longer, healthier. Americans are so convinced of a sort of uniqueness that we look down on everyone who lives differently than we do. We refuse to learn from others, as we refuse to learn from our own yesterday's mistakes. And we are not aware, or don't want to acknowledge, that we have become alone in the world, waging unwinnable wars, spending half our national income (or worse, borrowed money) on wars and planning for ever more ruthless wars in the future. We the People cannot see, and are not being told, that without question we will get to a point where we either have to hugely cut our war budget and tax the rich in proportion to their wealth or cease to exist as a nation.

And, of course, our economy is not the only aspect of our lives that is threatening our survival. More important perhaps is our continuing fouling of the air and water of the planet, and the plunder of our and other people's resources. In the last sixty years we have made more changes to the planet than were changed in the previous 200,000 years. Our western so-called civilization has so changed the planet that the climate is changing, and changing much more rapidly than we thought twenty years ago, more even than what scientists thought last year. A warmer world, a warmer, more acid ocean are dangers that effect all Life. Perhaps what is most dangerous is the increasing reduction of biodiversity, caused by our thoughtless destruction of rain forests, fouling rivers and the ocean, all of which threatens the planetary ecology. America now is perhaps the only country in the world where more than half of the people do not believe in global warming, climate change.

We here can no longer deny that the climate on this island is changing. This is the rainy side of the island. And, because on this side we have very little soil yet-- much of the land is relatively new lava-- we rely on regular rain; there is no ground water. We had two consecutive months with a total rainfall of a meager two inches. Plants and trees stopped growing, made almost no fruit, or died. We are daily seeing that happening. Fruit trees are at least a month behind the usual season. Trees have died or are dying. I'm growing all my own vegetables (in big pots) but have to water them almost daily. My water tank --yes, our water here is rainwater collected from my oversized roof, stored in a tank -- is not dangerously low yet, but I am very careful. Temperatures are unusually high for Hawai'i, where, "in the old days", we rarely had temperatures above 80. This summer it has been 85 and more almost every day. The doubters say this is an El Niño year; from now on all years will be El Niño years.

Pakistan is experiencing floods never before known. Russia has very un-Russian temperatures that cause uncontrollable forest fires that haze the air in big cities. Our American East Coast had temperatures of over a hundred, not once but many days in a row. Australia had or still has a killing drought. And yet some of our politicians insist that global warming is a hoax? And politicians cannot even talk about laws that might reduce our spewing CO2 into the atmosphere.

Shame on us. Don't we pride ourselves on being the world leader? Aren't we supposed to be the example? How can we ignore that it was our banks that almost totalled the planetary economy. For a long time we were the greatest polluter of the atmosphere, which, after all, we share with all Life on earth. Now China has surpassed us with a fraction of a percentage, but their population is three times ours, and they are much "greener" than we are. Where are the millions of green jobs the president promised? What is going on? Are we all asleep? Is the minority party closely tied to Big Money more powerful than the political majority? It certainly seems that way. Can't we understand that the enormous unemployment figures might have something to do with the fact that we don't make anything any more, we have outsourced our manufacturing jobs. The enormous debt that politicians suddenly worry about must have something to do with the extremely expensive wars we have been fighting for the past nine years. Where is the will to do something for the 15 million or more unemployed women and men in the richest country on earth? (If we still are; probably not). Why can't we do something about the millions of foreclosures? What's wrong with taxing where the money is? When are we going to be honest about why we are fighting two or more wars and maintaining a thousand bases across the globe? Is the president actually going to do what he promised to do: change Washington?

Or, are we so scared by the one word answer to all questions, "security," that we keep quiet while the corporations plunder what they have left of our earth and by doing that wipe out our future?

Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:31 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Guy R. McPherson: A Review Before The Exam

Time To Terminate Western Civilization Before It Terminates Us

A Review Before The Exam

By Guy R. McPherson [article link](#) [article link](#)

18 August, 2010 | Nature Bats Last | CounterCurrents

Actually, this review is too late for the many people who have already endured economic collapse. As any of those folks can tell the rest of us, we do not want to receive the lesson after the exam.

I've written all this before, but I have not recently provided a concise summary. This essay provides a brief overview of the dire nature of our predicaments with respect to fossil fuels. The primary consequences of our fossil-fuel addiction stem from two primary phenomena: peak oil and global climate change. The former spells the end of western civilization, which might come in time to prevent the extinction of our species at the hand of the latter.

Global climate change threatens our species with extinction by mid-century if we do not terminate the industrial economy soon. Increasingly dire forecasts from extremely conservative sources keep stacking up. Governments refuse to act because they know growth of the industrial economy depends (almost solely) on consumption of fossil fuels. Global climate change and energy decline are similar in this respect: neither is characterized by a politically viable solution.

There simply is no comprehensive substitute for crude oil. It is the [overwhelming fuel of choice for transportation](#), and there is no way out of the crude trap at this late juncture in the industrial era. We passed the world oil peak in 2005, which led to near-collapse of the world's industrial economy several times between September 2008 and May 2010. And we're certainly not out of the economic woods yet.

Crude oil is the master material on which all other depend. Without abundant supplies of inexpensive crude oil, we cannot produce uranium (which peaked in 1980), coal (which peaks within a decade or so), solar panels, wind turbines, wave power, ethanol, biodiesel, or hydroelectric power. Without abundant supplies of inexpensive crude oil, we cannot maintain the electric grid. Without abundant supplies of inexpensive crude oil, we cannot maintain the industrial economy for an extended period of time. Simply put, abundance supplies of inexpensive crude oil is fundamental to growth of the industrial economy and therefore to western civilization. Civilizations grow or die. Western civilization is done growing.

Not only is there no comprehensive substitute for crude oil, but partial substitutes simply do not scale. Solar panels on every roof? It's too late for that. Electric cars in every garage? It's too late for that. We simply do not have the cheap energy requisite to propping up an empire in precipitous decline. Energy efficiency and conservation will not save us, either, as demonstrated by the updated version of Jevons' paradox, the [Khazzoom-Brookes postulate](#).

Unchecked, western civilization drives us to one of two outcomes, and perhaps both: (1) Destruction of the living planet on which we depend for our survival, and/or (2) Runaway greenhouse and therefore the near-term extinction of our species. Why would we want to sustain such a system? It is immoral and omnicidal. The industrial economy enslaves us, drives us insane, and kills us in myriad ways. We need a living planet. Everything else is less important than the living planet on which we depend for our very lives. We act as if non-industrial cultures do not matter. We act as if non-human species do not matter. But they do matter, on many levels, including the level of human survival on Earth. And, of course, there's the matter of ecological overshoot, which is where we're spending all our time since at least 1980. Every day in overshoot brings us 205,000 people to deal with later. In this case, "deal with" means murder.

Shall we reduce Earth to a lifeless pile of rubble within a generation? Or shall we heat the planet beyond human habitability within two generations? Or shall we keep procreating as if there are no consequences for an already crowded planet? Pick your poison, but recognize it's poison. We're dead either way.

Don't slit those wrists just yet. This essay bears good news.

Western civilization has been in decline at least since 1979, when world per-capita oil supply peaked coincident with the Carter Doctrine regarding oil in the Middle East. In my mind, and perhaps only there, these two events marked the apex of American Empire, which began about the time Thomas Jefferson — arguably the most enlightened of the Founding Fathers — said, with respect to native Americans: “In war, they will kill some of us; we shall destroy all of them.” It wasn't long after 1979 that the U.S. manufacturing base was shipped overseas and we began serious engagement with Wall Street-based casino culture as the basis for our industrial economy. By most economic measure, we've experienced a lost decade, so it's too late for a fast crash of the industrial economy. We're in the midst of the same slow train wreck we've been experiencing for more than a decade, but the train is teetering on the edge of a cliff. Meanwhile, all we want to discuss, at every level in this country, is the quality of service in the dining car.

When the price of crude oil exhibits a price spike, an economic recession soon follows. Every recession since 1972 has been preceded by a spike in the price of oil, and direr spikes translate to deeper recessions. Economic dominoes began to fall at a rapid and accelerating rate when the price of crude spiked to \$147.27/bbl in July 2008. They haven't stopped falling, notwithstanding economic cheerleaders from government and corporations (as if the two are different at this point in American fascism). The reliance of our economy on derivatives trading cannot last much longer, considering the value of the derivatives — like the U.S. debt — greatly exceeds the value of all the currency in the world combined with all the gold mined in the history of the world.

Although it's all coming down, as it has been for quite a while, it's relatively clear imperial decline is accelerating. We're obviously headed for full-scale collapse of the industrial economy, as indicated by these [40 statistics](#). Even Fortune and CNN agree [economic collapse will be complete soon](#), though they don't express any understanding of how we arrived at this point or the hopelessness of extracting ourselves from the morass.

We know what economic collapse looks like, because we're in the midst of it. What does completion of the collapse look? I strongly suspect the economic endgame is capitulation of the stock markets. Shortly after we hit Dow 4,000, within a few days or maybe a couple weeks, the industrial economy seizes up as the lubricant is overcome with sand in the crankcase. Why would anybody work when the company for which they work is, literally, worthless? Even if they show up for a few days to punch the time-clock, the bank will not issue a check, and the banks won't be open to cash it. It won't be long before publicly traded utility companies don't have enough employees to keep the lights on. It won't be long before gas (nee service) stations shutter the doors. It won't be long before the grocery stores are empty. It won't be long before the water stops flowing through the municipal taps.

There are those who question my credibility, particularly when I make predictions. We're in the midst of a war to save our humanity and the living planet, and some readers are worried about my credibility, as determined by the power of the main stream. My responses are two-fold: (1) I'm hardly sticking my neck out, unlike when I made my “new Dark Age” [prediction in 2007](#) (at which point the price of oil had yet to exceed \$80/bbl, the industrial economy appeared headed for perennial nirvana, and everybody who read or heard me thought I was insane); of the fifty or so energy-literate scholars I read, about half indicate the new Dark Age starts within a year, and a large majority of the other half give us less than two years; (2) Get over it. This war has two sides, finally. This revolution needs to be powerful and fun, and we cannot afford to lose. We cannot even afford to worry about seeking credibility from those who are having us murder every remaining aspect of the living planet on which we depend for our survival.

Credibility? Respectability? It's time to stop playing by the rules of the destroyers. We need witnesses and warriors, and we need them now. It's time to terminate western civilization before it terminates us.

Lesson over. The exam comes within a couple years. And pop quizzes come up every day in this unfair system.

Guy R. McPherson is Profesor Emeritus at the University of Arizona. Educated in the ecology and management of natural resources, his early scholarly efforts produced many publications of little lasting importance. In mid-career, he began to focus on development and creative application of ecological theory, primarily with an eye toward conservation of biological diversity. Currently, his scholarly efforts focus on social criticism, with results that appear most frequently on

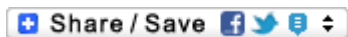
newspaper op-ed pages. In addition, he facilitates research by students and he prepares synthetic documents focused on articulation of the links between (1) environmental protection, social justice, and the human economy and (2) science and its application. These efforts have produced more than 100 scholarly papers and nine books.

In 2009 at the height of a productive career, McPherson left the university to prepare for collapse. He now lives in an off-grid, straw-bale house where he puts into practice his lifelong interest in sustainable living via organic gardening, raising small animals for eggs and milk, and working with members of his rural community.

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Thursday, August 19, 2010

[Sandy LeonVest: Green Activists Need Allies in Anti-War Movement](#)

Green Activists Need Allies in Anti-War Movement

by Sandy LeonVest [article link](#)

August 18, 2010 | CommonDreams

The most recent tally of the cost of war by the non-profit National Priorities Project (NPP) puts total military-related expenditures (through September, 2010) at a mind-numbing \$1.09 trillion.

That's 'Trillion'- with a 'T' -- \$749.9 billion for Iraq and \$337.8 billion for Afghanistan since 2001.

In a less Orwellian world, such stunning numbers would be taken up as a mantra by those agitating for change of any sort. Yet, as relevant as they are to our "national well-being," the trillions of US dollars funneled into the war machine in the past decade are rarely (if ever) cited in the ongoing climate change narrative.

I can't remember the last time I heard an environmentalist or climate activist here in the US point out that, for instance, shortening the Afghanistan war by just one month would free up enough money (about \$10 billion) to implement renewable energy projects in countless communities across the nation or fund thousands of sustainable farming projects and/or programs that encourage better efficiency and conservation.

These activists might want to consider the information yielded by the "trade-off tool" featured on NPP's website. The tool breaks down what could have happened in communities around the US, had the money spent on war gone toward actually creating something -- whether healthcare, education, housing or clean energy. In California, for example, taxpayers have paid \$137.8 billion for total Iraq and Afghanistan war spending since 2001. For that amount of money, according to the trade-off tool, nearly 50 million homes could have been equipped with solar power for a full year.

Green Revolution OR Black Hole of War - You Can't Have Both

Back in 1992, the authors of the groundbreaking "Rio Declaration" wrote: "Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible ... Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development."

That simple declaration encompasses an equally simple (and obvious) concept - one that shouldn't require much explanation; one that, in a less Orwellian world, would surely be incorporated into the narrative of those agitating for a "Clean Energy Revolution." Yet, to this day, it is not just the president, or even Congress, who continues to ignore this all-important 'talking point.' Climate activists themselves remain either unwilling or unable to put their 'green-ness' in proper perspective - one that includes the absurdity of implementing a "Clean Energy Revolution" in a permanent wartime economy.

In January of 2009, just after President Obama delivered his inaugural address, I wrote a piece that sought to underscore that point. It suggested (god-forbid) that the president would need to choose between "healing the planet" or waging war on it - that he could not do both. The premise was a simple one: Making the transition to a "Clean Energy Economy" while continuing to maintain a warfare state is oxymoronic.

Another article, written only this month by climate activist and founder of 350.org, Bill McKibben ("We're Hot as Hell and We're Not Going to Take it Any More") misses that point entirely. It is illustrative of the problem.

In his piece, McKibben writes that it's time for climate activists to "get mad." He offers this advice after citing the newest and most dire climate science to date and (quite rightly) complaining about the US Senate's abject failure to address climate change in any meaningful way.

"Last year," wrote McKibben, "with almost no money, our scruffy little outfit, 350.org, managed to organize what Foreign Policy called the "largest ever coordinated global rally of any kind" on any issue ..."

I don't know whether it's true that McKibben's organization staged the "largest ever" global rally of any kind, but I do know that "truth" is as much about what is not said as what is actually said. If McKibben is serious about activists telling the truth, "resolutely and constantly," then why not tell the whole truth? Why not, for instance, include in their narrative the significance of that (mind-numbing) \$1.09 trillion allocated to war expenditures since 2001?

Will the Real Truth-Tellers Please Stand Up?

Now, don't get me wrong.

Anti-war groups (and organizations like the National Priority Project) continue to inform the national debate with ongoing analysis and critical statistics. Peace activists, while shamefully marginalized by the "mainstream media," continue to drive home the point that "war is bad for children and other living things." These under-appreciated heroes struggle against all odds just to keep that simple concept in the mainstream consciousness.

But, here in the US, the nexus between the peace movement and the climate movement is a fragile one. There still exists no cohesive coalition to connect the dots between war and climate change. And, thanks to a wholly corporate-owned media, the groups brave enough to make those connections, such as Berkeley's "Environmentalists Against War," seem to exist only at the margins of the conversation. All too often, like the proverbial tree in the forest, they make a sound that no one hears.

Groups like 350.org, on the other hand, are very big on "political realities."

They understand the importance of being considered "legitimate" by the mainstream media. Toward that dubious end, they often dismiss as "too radical" any discussion of the impact of war on everything humane. Never mind making the point that war is a global travesty, destroying everything in its path, from human settlements and native habitats to wildlife and the land, air and water.

Besides, as long as the media continues to treat them as if they were the only 'real' representatives of the "climate change movement," they will continue to dominate (that spectrum of) the "climate narrative." I would argue that, since these groups garner what little media attention that narrative manages to attract, it is reasonable to ask that they make better use of it. To do that, their leaders will need to be willing to risk offending war industry profiteers who drain US coffers to finance the ongoing plundering and polluting of the planet. Otherwise, there's little chance of "upending" those industries that, as McKibben suggests, "made a fortune by treating the atmosphere as an open sewer for the byproducts of their main business."

I do not mean to suggest that McKibben and 350.org and other mainstream climate activists aren't doing good work. It's just that, while they're in the spotlight talking about "350 PPM" or "putting up solar panels and digging community gardens," why not talk about the vital connections between Big Oil and the corporate-military complex?

Failing to include the impact of war and the bloated military budget (not to mention fossil fuel consumption by the military and its ancillary industries) in any discussion about "climate change" is like talking about water without mentioning Big Agriculture. As long as mainstream environmental groups refuse to talk about the ways in which war and military spending (to control access to the fuel that powers our oil-based economy) impact the very changes they claim to seek, those changes will remain elusive.

Change the politics, save the climate

When it comes to "connecting the dots," European activists have it all over their peers in the US. In Europe, coalition-building between single-issue groups has long been a primary strategy. Most European activists view war, climate change, privatization and globalization as part of the same problem - corporate control of the political system. During the Copenhagen climate summit in 2009, one activist summed up that attitude with spray paint, writing on the sidewalk near where Obama stayed, "change the politics, save the climate."

Here in the US, until activists are willing to stop talking about climate change as if it existed in a vacuum, separate and distinct from the corporate war machine that profits from the same industries that helped create it, those dots will remain unconnected.

In May, WikiLeaks released a little publicized CIA memorandum bearing the provocative title: "How to Sustain Western Europe's Support for the War." The subtitle, "Why Counting on Apathy Might Not Be Enough," should prove instructive to US climate activists. The memorandum notes: "The Afghanistan mission's low public salience has allowed French and German leaders to disregard popular opposition ... It is therefore necessary to 'tailor messaging' to 'forestall or at least contain backlash.'"

As Noam Chomsky recently observed, "The CIA memorandum should remind us that states have an internal enemy: their own population, which must be controlled when state policy is opposed by the public ... Democratic societies rely not on force but on propaganda, engineering consent by 'necessary illusion' and 'emotionally potent oversimplification ...'"

US climate activists would do well to heed these words.

From rapidly melting glaciers to the recent flooding and subsequent displacement of millions in Pakistan, to the record heat - with temperatures as high as 115 degrees, not just in Russia, but parts of Europe and the US as well - one look at the headlines makes it crystal clear that so-called "single-issue politics" is a luxury activists can no longer afford.

Notwithstanding Defense Secretary Robert Gates' recently announced military budget cuts, we are not likely to see a Democratic 'revolt' in Congress against excessive military spending, much less a conversation in the nation's capital about how that spending impacts the nation's well being - not in this lifetime. That job will need to be taken up by activists, who must do more than ratchet up the rhetoric. We'll need to find the courage to get beyond the single issue politics that fit so nicely into the narrow parameters set by the corporate media. We'll need also to present a unified front that includes climate justice activists, peace activists, fair trade and anti-globalization activists and groups like '[Environmentalists Against War](#).' That coalition must be willing to talk about climate change, not just as an environmental threat, but in the context of the warfare state and the taxpayer-supported industries that profit from perpetual war.

Until that happens, and as long as we choose to keep talking around and around in circles, while ignoring the folly of trying to launch a "Clean Energy Revolution" in a war-drenched environment, we are destined to remain complicit in that cycle.

And that is exactly what they are counting on.

Sandy LeonVest is the editor and publisher of SolarTimes, an independent quarterly energy newspaper with a progressive slant. SolarTimes is available online at www.solartimes.org, and distributed in hardcopy throughout the Bay Area and beyond. Sandy LeonVest's work has been published locally, as well as internationally, and includes 15 years in the news department at KPFA Radio in Berkeley, CA.

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Tuesday, August 17, 2010

[Paul Craig Roberts: The Ecstasy of Empire](#)

Americans have no greater enemies than Wall Street and the corporations and their prostitutes in Congress and the White House

The Ecstasy of Empire: How Close Is America's Demise?

Without a revolution, Americans are history

by Paul Craig Roberts [article link](#)

August 16, 2010 | Global Research

The United States is running out of time to get its budget and trade deficits under control. Despite the urgency of the situation, 2010 has been wasted in hype about a non-existent recovery. As recently as August 2 Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner penned a New York Times Column, "Welcome to the Recovery."

As John Williams (shadowstats.com) has made clear on many occasions, an appearance of recovery was created by over-counting employment and undercounting inflation. Warnings by Williams, Gerald Celente, and myself have gone unheeded, but our warnings recently had echos from Boston University professor Laurence Kotlikoff and from David Stockman, who excoriated the Republican Party for becoming big spending Democrats.

It is encouraging to see a bit of realization that, this time, Washington cannot spend the economy out of recession. The deficits are already too large for the dollar to survive as reserve currency, and deficit spending cannot put Americans back to work in jobs that have been moved offshore.

However, the solutions offered by those who are beginning to recognize that there is a problem are discouraging. Kotlikoff thinks the solution is massive Social Security and Medicare cuts or massive tax increases or hyperinflation to destroy the massive debts.

Perhaps economists lack imagination, or perhaps they don't want to be cut off from Wall Street and corporate subsidies, but Social Security and Medicare are insufficient at their present levels, especially considering the erosion of private pensions by the dot com, derivative and real estate bubbles. Cuts in Social Security and Medicare, for which people have paid 15% of their earnings all their life, would result in starvation and deaths from curable diseases.

Tax increases make even less sense. It is widely acknowledged that the majority of households cannot survive on one job. Both husband and wife work and often one of the partners has two jobs in order to make ends meet. Raising taxes makes it harder to make ends meet--thus more foreclosures, more food stamps, more homelessness. What kind of economist or humane person thinks this is a solution?

Ah, but we will tax the rich. The usual idiocy. The rich have enough money. They will simply stop earning.

Let's get real. Here is what the government is likely to do. Once the Washington idiots realize that the dollar is at risk and that they can no longer finance their wars by borrowing abroad, the government will either levy a tax on private pensions on the grounds that the pensions have accumulated tax-deferred, or the government will require pension fund managers to purchase Treasury debt with our pensions. This will buy the government a bit more time while pension accounts are loaded up with worthless paper.

The last Bush budget deficit (2008) was in the \$400-500 billion range, about the size of the Chinese, Japanese, and OPEC trade surpluses with the US. Traditionally, these trade surpluses have been recycled to the US and finance the federal budget deficit. In 2009 and 2010 the federal deficit jumped to \$1,400 billion, a back-to-back trillion dollar increase. There are not sufficient trade surpluses to finance a deficit this large. From where comes the money?

The answer is from individuals fleeing the stock market into "safe" Treasury bonds and from the bankster bailout, not so much the TARP money as the Federal Reserve's exchange of bank reserves for questionable financial paper such as subprime derivatives. The banks used their excess reserves to purchase Treasury debt.

These financing maneuvers are one-time tricks. Once people have fled stocks, that movement into Treasuries is over. The opposition to the bankster bailout likely precludes another. So where does the money come from the next time?

The Treasury was able to unload a lot of debt thanks to "the Greek crisis," which the New York banksters and hedge funds multiplied into "the euro crisis." The financial press served as a financing arm for the US Treasury by creating panic about European debt and the euro. Central banks and individuals who had taken refuge from the dollar in euros were panicked out of their euros, and they rushed into dollars by purchasing US Treasury debt.

This movement from euros to dollars weakened the alternative reserve currency to the dollar, halted the dollar's decline, and financed the massive US budget deficit a while longer.

Possibly the game can be replayed with Spanish debt, Irish debt, and whatever unlucky country swept in by the thoughtless expansion of the European Union.

But when no countries remain that can be destabilized by Wall Street investment banksters and hedge funds, what then finances the US budget deficit?

The only remaining financier is the Federal Reserve. When Treasury bonds brought to auction do not sell, the Federal Reserve must purchase them. The Federal Reserve purchases the bonds by creating new demand deposits, or checking accounts, for the Treasury. As the Treasury spends the proceeds of the new debt sales, the US money supply expands by the amount of the Federal Reserve's purchase of Treasury debt.

Do goods and services expand by the same amount? Imports will increase as US jobs have been offshored and given to foreigners, thus worsening the trade deficit. When the Federal Reserve purchases the Treasury's new debt issues, the money supply will increase by more than the supply of domestically produced goods and services. Prices are likely to rise.

How high will they rise? The longer money is created in order that government can pay its bills, the more likely hyperinflation will be the result.

The economy has not recovered. By the end of this year it will be obvious that the collapsing economy means a larger than \$1.4 trillion budget deficit to finance. Will it be \$2 trillion? Higher?

Whatever the size, the rest of the world will see that the dollar is being printed in such quantities that it cannot serve as reserve currency. At that point wholesale dumping of dollars will result as foreign central banks try to unload a worthless currency.

The collapse of the dollar will drive up the prices of imports and offshored goods on which Americans are dependent. Wal-Mart shoppers will think they have mistakenly gone into Neiman Marcus.

Domestic prices will also explode as a growing money supply chases the supply of goods and services still made in America by Americans.

The dollar as reserve currency cannot survive the conflagration. When the dollar goes the US cannot finance its trade deficit.

Therefore, imports will fall sharply, thus adding to domestic inflation and, as the US is energy import-dependent, there will be transportation disruptions that will disrupt work and grocery store deliveries.

Panic will be the order of the day.

Will farms will be raided? Will those trapped in cities resort to riots and looting?

Is this the likely future that "our" government and "our patriotic" corporations have created for us?

To borrow from Lenin, "What can be done?"

Here is what can be done. The wars, which benefit no one but the military-security complex and Israel's territorial expansion, can be immediately ended. This would reduce the US budget deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars per year. More hundreds of billions of dollars could be saved by cutting the rest of the military budget, which in its present size, exceeds the budgets of all the serious military powers on earth combined.

US military spending reflects the unaffordable and unattainable crazed neoconservative goal of US Empire and world hegemony. What fool in Washington thinks that China is going to finance US hegemony over China?

The only way that the US will again have an economy is by bringing back the offshored jobs. The loss of these jobs impoverished Americans while producing over-sized gains for Wall Street, shareholders, and corporate executives. These jobs can be brought home where they belong by taxing corporations according to where value is added to their product. If value is added to their goods and services in China, corporations would have a high tax rate. If value is added to their goods and services in the US, corporations would have a low tax rate.

This change in corporate taxation would offset the cheap foreign labor that has sucked jobs out of America, and it would rebuild the ladders of upward mobility that made America an opportunity society.

If the wars are not immediately stopped and the jobs brought back to America, the US is relegated to the trash bin of history.

Obviously, the corporations and Wall Street would use their financial power and campaign contributions to block any legislation that would reduce short-term earnings and bonuses by bringing jobs back to Americans. Americans have no greater enemies than Wall Street and the corporations and their prostitutes in Congress and the White House.

The neocons allied with Israel, who control both parties and much of the media, are strung out on the ecstasy of Empire.

The United States and the welfare of its 300 million people cannot be restored unless the neocons, Wall Street, the corporations, and their servile slaves in Congress and the White House can be defeated.

Without a revolution, Americans are history.

Paul Craig Roberts is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:23 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Chalmers Johnson: The Guns of August

The Guns of August: Lowering the Flag on the American Century

by Chalmers Johnson [article link](#) [article link](#)

August 17, 2010 | TomDispatch | CommonDreams

In 1962, the historian Barbara Tuchman published a book about the start of World War I and called it *The Guns of August*. It went on to win a Pulitzer Prize. She was, of course, looking back at events that had occurred almost 50 years earlier and had at her disposal documents and information not available to participants. They were acting, as Vietnam-era Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara put it, in the fog of war.

So where are we this August of 2010, with guns blazing in one war in Afghanistan even as we try to extricate ourselves from another in Iraq? Where are we, as we impose sanctions on Iran and North Korea (and threaten worse), while sending our latest wonder weapons, pilotless drones armed with bombs and missiles, into Pakistan's tribal borderlands, Yemen, and who knows where else, tasked with endless "targeted killings" which, in blunter times, used to be called assassinations? Where exactly are we, as we continue to garrison much of the globe even as our country finds itself incapable of paying for basic services?

I wish I had a crystal ball to peer into and see what historians will make of our own guns of August in 2060. The fog of war, after all, is just a stand-in for what might be called "the fog of the future," the inability of humans to peer with any accuracy far into the world to come. Let me nonetheless try to offer a few glimpses of what that foggy landscape some years ahead might reveal, and even hazard a few predictions about what possibilities await still-imperial America.

Let me begin by asking: What harm would befall the United States if we actually decided, against all odds, to close those hundreds and hundreds of bases, large and small, that we garrison around the world? What if we actually dismantled our empire, and came home? Would Genghis Khan-like hordes descend on us? Not likely. Neither a land nor a sea invasion of the U.S. is even conceivable.

Would 9/11-type attacks accelerate? It seems far likelier to me that, as our overseas profile shrank, the possibility of such attacks would shrink with it.

Would various countries we've invaded, sometimes occupied, and tried to set on the path of righteousness and democracy decline into "failed states?" Probably some would, and preventing or controlling this should be the function of the United Nations or of neighboring states. (It is well to remember that the murderous Cambodian regime of Pol Pot was finally brought to an end not by us, but by neighboring Vietnam.)

Sagging Empire

In other words, the main fears you might hear in Washington -- if anyone even bothered to wonder what would happen, should we begin to dismantle our empire -- would prove but chimeras. They would, in fact, be remarkably similar to Washington's dire predictions in the 1970s about states all over Asia, then Africa, and beyond falling, like so many dominoes, to communist domination if we did not win the war in Vietnam.

What, then, would the world be like if the U.S. lost control globally -- Washington's greatest fear and deepest reflection of its own overblown sense of self-worth -- as is in fact happening now despite our best efforts? What would that world be like if the U.S. just gave it all up? What would happen to us if we were no longer the "sole superpower" or the world's self-appointed policeman?

In fact, we would still be a large and powerful nation-state with a host of internal and external problems. An immigration and drug crisis on our southern border, soaring health-care costs, a weakening education system, an aging population, an aging infrastructure, an unending recession -- none of these are likely to go away soon, nor are any of them likely to be tackled in a serious or successful way as long as we continue to spend our wealth on armies, weapons, wars, global garrisons, and bribes for petty dictators.

Even without our interference, the Middle East would continue to export oil, and if China has been buying up an ever larger share of what remains underground in those lands, perhaps that should spur us into conserving more and moving more rapidly into the field of alternative energies.

Rising Power

Meanwhile, whether we dismantle our empire or not, China will become (if it isn't already) the world's next superpower. It, too, faces a host of internal problems, including many of the same ones we have. However, it has a booming economy, a favorable balance of payments vis-à-vis much of the rest of the world (particularly the U.S., which is currently running an annual trade deficit with China of \$227 billion), and a government and population determined to develop the country into a powerful, economically dominant nation-state.

Fifty years ago, when I began my academic career as a scholar of China and Japan, I was fascinated by the modern history of both countries. My first book dealt with the way the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s spurred Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party he headed on a trajectory to power, thanks to its nationalist resistance to that foreign invader. Incidentally, it is not difficult to find many examples of this process in which a domestic political group gains power because it champions resistance to foreign troops. In the immediate post-WWII period, it occurred in Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia; with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, all over Eastern Europe; and today, it is surely occurring in Afghanistan and probably in Iraq as well.

Once the Cultural Revolution began in China in 1966, I temporarily lost interest in studying the country. I thought I knew where that disastrous internal upheaval was taking China and so turned back to Japan, which by then was well launched on its amazing recovery from World War II, thanks to state-guided, but not state-owned, economic growth.

This pattern of economic development, sometimes called the "developmental state," differed fundamentally from both Soviet-type control of the economy and the laissez-faire approach of the U.S. Despite Japan's success, by the 1990s its increasingly sclerotic bureaucracy had led the country into a prolonged period of deflation and stagnation. Meanwhile,

post-U.S.S.R. Russia, briefly in thrall to U.S. economic advice, fell captive to rapacious oligarchs who dismantled the command economy only to enrich themselves.

In China, Communist Party leader Deng Xiaoping and his successors were able to watch developments in Japan and Russia, learning from them both. They have clearly adopted effective aspects of both systems for their economy and society. With a modicum of luck, economic and otherwise, and a continuation of its present well-informed, rational leadership, China should continue to prosper without either threatening its neighbors or the United States.

To imagine that China might want to start a war with the U.S. -- even over an issue as deeply emotional as the ultimate political status of Taiwan -- would mean projecting a very different path for that country than the one it is currently embarked on.

Lowering the Flag on the American Century

Thirty-five years from now, America's official century of being top dog (1945-2045) will have come to an end; its time may, in fact, be running out right now. We are likely to begin to look ever more like a giant version of England at the end of its imperial run, as we come face-to-face with, if not necessarily to terms with, our aging infrastructure, declining international clout, and sagging economy. It may, for all we know, still be Hollywood's century decades from now, and so we may still make waves on the cultural scene, just as Britain did in the 1960s with the Beatles and Twiggy. Tourists will undoubtedly still visit some of our natural wonders and perhaps a few of our less scruffy cities, partly because the dollar-exchange rate is likely to be in their favor.

If, however, we were to dismantle our empire of military bases and redirect our economy toward productive, instead of destructive, industries; if we maintained our volunteer armed forces primarily to defend our own shores (and perhaps to be used at the behest of the United Nations); if we began to invest in our infrastructure, education, health care, and savings, then we might have a chance to reinvent ourselves as a productive, normal nation. Unfortunately, I don't see that happening. Peering into that foggy future, I simply can't imagine the U.S. dismantling its empire voluntarily, which doesn't mean that, like all sets of imperial garrisons, our bases won't go someday.

Instead, I foresee the U.S. drifting along, much as the Obama administration seems to be drifting along in the war in Afghanistan. The common talk among economists today is that high unemployment may linger for another decade. Add in low investment and depressed spending (except perhaps by the government) and I fear T.S. Eliot had it right when he wrote: "This is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper."

I have always been a political analyst rather than an activist. That is one reason why I briefly became a consultant to the CIA's top analytical branch, and why I now favor disbanding the Agency. Not only has the CIA lost its *raison d'être* by allowing its intelligence gathering to become politically tainted, but its clandestine operations have created a climate of impunity in which the U.S. can assassinate, torture, and imprison people at will worldwide.

Just as I lost interest in China when that country's leadership headed so blindly down the wrong path during the Cultural Revolution, so I'm afraid I'm losing interest in continuing to analyze and dissect the prospects for the U.S. over the next few years. I applaud the efforts of young journalists to tell it like it is, and of scholars to assemble the data that will one day enable historians to describe where and when we went astray. I especially admire insights from the inside, such as those of ex-military men like Andrew Bacevich and Chuck Spinney. And I am filled with awe by men and women who are willing to risk their careers, incomes, freedom, and even lives to protest -- such as the priests and nuns of SOA Watch, who regularly picket the School of the Americas and call attention to the presence of American military bases and misbehavior in South America.

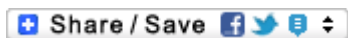
I'm impressed as well with [Pfc. Bradley Manning](#), if he is indeed the person responsible for potentially making public 92,000 secret documents about the war in Afghanistan. Daniel Ellsberg has long been calling for someone to do what he himself did when he released the Pentagon Papers during the Vietnam War. He must be surprised that his call has now been answered -- and in such an unlikely way.

My own role these past 20 years has been that of Cassandra, whom the gods gave the gift of foreseeing the future, but also cursed because no one believed her. I wish I could be more optimistic about what's in store for the U.S. Instead, there isn't a day that our own guns of August don't continue to haunt me.

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Chalmers Johnson is the author of [Blowback](#) (2000), [The Sorrows of Empire](#) (2004), and [Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic](#) (2006), among other works. His newest book, [Dismantling the Empire: America's Last Best Hope](#) (Metropolitan Books), has just been published. To listen to Timothy MacBain's latest TomCast audio interview in which Johnson discusses America's empire of bases and his new book, click [here](#) or, to download it to your iPod, [here](#).

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:14 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Cindy Sheehan: Racketeers for Capitalism

Racketeers for Capitalism

by Cindy Sheehan [article link](#)

August 17, 2010 | CommonDreams

"I spent 33 years in the Marines. Most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism."

Major General Smedley D. Butler, War is a Racket (1935)

I remember when the US war dead in Iraq reached 1000 sometime in the summer of 2005. My youngest child and her boyfriend accompanied me to a vigil in Davis, Ca. where we held candles, pictures of Casey, each other, and sobbed-not just for Casey, but for all the rest, also. And not just for the Americans, but for the Iraqis, too.

Then I remember when the needless toll reached 2000 in the fall of 2005-I got arrested with about 25 others in front of the White House-such organizations at MoveOn.org preferred candlelight vigils to direct action. I warned them if we didn't do something, then we would be mourning 3000-that total came in the early spring of 2007. Now the total for Iraq stands at 4415 and I was recently told by the founder of Veterans for Peace [Arlington West Memorial](#) on the beach in Santa Barbara (where I first visited five weeks after Casey was killed on Mother's Day) that they would no longer place a cross in the sand for my son, or the other 4414 dead in Iraq because Iraq is "old news."

Today, (August 17) we learn that in Afghanistan, three U.S. troops, three NATO troops and at least seven civilians were killed. This is another grim marker along the Imperial Road to Ruin [as Barack Obama's regime has managed to kill as many troops in Afghanistan in 19 months as the Bush stain did in seven years.](#)

I happen to believe that the wars and everything else became Obama's problems on January 20, 2009, but in reading comments about today's carnage on that bastion of centrism, the Huffington Post - many people either believe that the Afghanistan occupation just became Obama's War today, or that (in the case of at least one commenter) - Obama was forced to send more troops, and when one sends more troops, more of them will die. The matter-of-fact callousness of this remark stung like a hornet to me, and I bet the mothers of numbers 1227, 1228, and 1229 did not feel so cavalier when the Grim Reapers in dress khakis knocked on their doors today.

As little as we hear about U.S. troops, as is our custom here in the Empire, the tragic slaughter of civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan doesn't even deserve a blip on our radar screens. I watched three hours of MSDNC (MSNBC) tonight and the manipulative gyrations to find out how many ways that they could talk about the "distraction" of the

"mosque" at ground zero without talking about the one-million plus Arabs (Christians, Muslims, Jews, etc) that the psychopathic U.S. response to September 11, 2001 has killed, was pathetic and frustrating to watch.

There has been a bumper sticker saying for years that goes: "What if they gave a war and no one showed up?"

Well, "they," the ones that give the wars are not going to stop. "They" have too much at stake to give up the cash cow of wars for Imperial Profit, Power, and Expansion. "They" use the toady media to whip up nationalistic and patriotic fervor to get our kids to be thrown together with the victims in a meat grinder of destruction and we just sit here and allow them to do it.

The Empire preys on our kids using all the tools at its disposal: Economic panic, high college tuition, high unemployment and a mythology that the U.S. has some existential right to steal the resources of other nations.

Not only do these occupations needlessly kill humans on both sides, but our troops are being dehumanized because of the institutional dehumanization of the so-called enemies, also. If you have not seen the [Wikileaks Collateral Murder](#) video, you have to watch it, but you also have to realize that these callous crimes are a daily occurrence in the "war" zones-not isolated incidents. We allow "Them" to turn our youth into animals for their sport so they can live opulent and obscene lifestyles while most of us struggle to even make ends meet.

To be proactive, we have to stop offering up our children to be sacrificed for the profit of the few.

I have co-published the 75th Anniversary Edition of Major General Smedley Butler's War is a Racket.

This simple, yet eloquent treatise on the greed of the elite class to the pain and suffering of our class should be in every home, classroom, school library, and shelf of your local peace group.

The cannon fodder of the Empire first belongs to their families--then their communities--then the Empire with many other stops along the way for school, church, Scouts, sports, band, puppy-love, etc. WE are the only ones that can stop this. We not only can, but we must insert ourselves between the murderers and our children and the children of the world.

[Ordering Info for 'War is a Racket'](#)

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:08 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Monday, August 16, 2010

[Lawrence S. Wittner: How Much is Enough? America's Runaway Military Spending](#)

How Much is Enough? America's Runaway Military Spending

by: Lawrence S. Wittner [article link](#) [article link](#)

16 August 2010 | History News Network | t r u t h o u t

The August 9 announcement by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates of cost-containment measures at the Defense Department should not obscure two underlying facts. First, as he conceded, these proposed economies will not result in cutting the overall Pentagon budget, which is slated for expansion. And, second, as a Washington Post article reported, "defense officials characterized them as a political preemptive strike to fend off growing sentiment elsewhere in Washington to tackle the federal government's soaring deficits by making deep cuts in military spending."

But why should anyone want to cut the U.S. military budget?

One reason is that—with \$549 billion requested for basic military expenditures and another \$159 billion requested for U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—the record \$708 billion military spending called for by the Obama administration for fiscal 2011 will be nearly equivalent to the military spending of all other nations in the world combined. When it comes to military appropriations, the U.S. government already spends about seven times as much as China, thirteen times as much as Russia, and seventy-three times as much as Iran.

Is this really necessary? During the Cold War, the United States confronted far more dangerous and numerous military adversaries, including the Soviet Union. And the U.S. government certainly possessed an enormous and devastating military arsenal, as well as the armed forces that used it. But in those years, U.S. military spending accounted for only 26 percent of the world total. Today, as U.S. Congressman Barney Frank has observed, "we have fewer enemies and we're spending more money."

Where does this vast outlay of U.S. tax dollars—the greatest military appropriations in U.S. history—go? One place is to overseas U.S. military bases. According to Chalmers Johnson, a political scientist and former CIA consultant, as much as \$250 billion per year is used to maintain some 865 U.S. military facilities in more than forty countries and overseas U.S. territories.

The money also goes to fund vast legions of private military contractors. A recent Pentagon report estimated that the Defense Department relies on 766,000 contractors at an annual cost of about \$155 billion, and this figure does not include private intelligence organizations. A Washington Post study, which included all categories, estimated that the Defense Department employs 1.2 million private contractors.

Of course, enormously expensive air and naval weapons systems—often accompanied by huge cost over-runs—account for a substantial portion of the Pentagon's budget. But exactly who are these high tech, Cold War weapons to be used against? Certainly they have little value in a world threatened by terrorism. As Congressman Frank has remarked: "I don't think any terrorist has ever been shot by a nuclear submarine."

Furthermore, when bemoaning budget deficits, Americans should not forget the enormous price the United States has paid for its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to the highly-respected National Priorities Project, their cost, so far, amounts to \$1.06 trillion. (For those readers who are unaccustomed to dealing with a trillion dollar budget, that's \$1,060,000,000,000.)

When calculating the benefits and losses of these kinds of expenditures, we should also include the opportunities forgone through military spending. How many times have government officials told us that there is not enough money available for health care, for schools, for parks, for the arts, for public broadcasting, for unemployment insurance, for law enforcement, and for maintenance of America's highway, bridge, and rail infrastructure?

Admittedly, there are other reasons for America's failure to use its substantial wealth to provide adequate care for its own people. Some Americans, driven by mean-spiritedness or greed, resent the very idea of sharing with others. Furthermore, years of tax cuts for the wealthy have diminished public revenues.

Even so, it is hard to deny that there is a heavy price being paid for making military power the nation's top priority. With more than half of U.S. government discretionary spending going to feed the Pentagon, we should not be surprised that—in America, at least—it is no longer considered feasible to use public resources to feed the hungry, heal the sick, or house the homeless.

We would do well to recall an observation by one of the great prophets of our time, Martin Luther King, Jr.: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

Dr. Wittner is Professor of History at the State University of New York/Albany. His latest book is [Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement](#) (Stanford University Press).

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Five Absurd Things That Simply Can't Happen in Wartime Washington

by Tom Engelhardt [article link](#) [article link](#)

August 15, 2010 | TomDispatch | CommonDreams

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [12:25 PM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Sunday, August 15, 2010

[David Korten: 10 Common Sense Principles for a New Economy](#)

10 Common Sense Principles for a New Economy

It's time we the people declare our independence from the money-favoring Wall Street economy.

by David Korten [article link](#)

Aug 06, 2010 | YES! Magazine

I find hope in the fact that millions of people the world over are seeing through the moral and practical fallacies underlying the Wall Street economy and—by contributing to the creation of a [New Economy](#)—are taking charge of their economic lives.

Here are ten common sense principles to frame the New Economy that we the people must now bring forth:

1. **The [proper purpose](#) of an economy is to secure just, sustainable, and joyful livelihoods for all.** This may come as something of a shock to Wall Street financiers who profit from financial bubbles, securities fraud, low wages, unemployment, foreign sweatshops, tax evasion, public subsidies, and monopoly pricing.
2. **[GDP](#) is a measure of the economic cost of producing a given level of human well-being and happiness.** In the economy, as in any well-run business, the goal should be to minimize cost, not maximize it.
3. **A rational reallocation of real resources can reduce the human burden on the Earth's biosphere and simultaneously improve the health and happiness of all.** The Wall Street economy wastes enormous resources on things that actually reduce the quality of our lives—[war](#), automobile dependence, suburban sprawl, energy-inefficient buildings, [financial speculation](#), advertising, [incarceration](#) for minor, victimless crimes. The most important step toward bringing ourselves into balance with the biosphere is to eliminate the things that are bad for our health and happiness.
4. **Markets allocate efficiently only within a framework of appropriate rules to maintain competition, cost internalization, balanced trade, domestic investment, and equality.** These are essential conditions for efficient market function. Without rules, a market economy quickly morphs into a system of [corporate monopolies](#) engaged in suppressing wages, exporting jobs, collecting public subsidies, poisoning air, land, and water, expropriating resources, corrupting democracy, and a host of other activities that represent an egregiously inefficient and unjust distribution of resources.
5. **A proper money system roots the power to create and allocate money in people and communities in order to facilitate the creation of livelihoods and ecologically balanced community wealth.** Money properly serves life, not the reverse. Wall Street uses money to consolidate its power to expropriate the real wealth of the rest of the society. Main Street uses money to connect underutilized resources with unmet needs. Public policy properly favors Main Street.

6. **Money, which is easily created with a simple accounting entry, should never be the deciding constraint in making public resource allocation decisions.** This is particularly obvious in the case of economic recessions or depressions, which occur when money fails to [flow to where it is needed](#) to put people to work producing essential goods and services. If money is the only lack, then make the accounting entry and get on with it.

7. **Speculation, the inflation of financial bubbles, risk externalization, the extraction of usury, and the use of creative accounting to create money from nothing, unrelated to the creation of anything of real value, serve no valid social purpose.** The Wall Street corporations that engage in these activities are not in the business of contributing to the creation of real community wealth. They are in the business of expropriating it, a polite term for theft. They should be regulated or taxed out of existence.

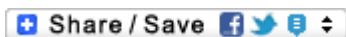
8. **Greed is not a virtue; sharing is not a sin.** If your primary business purpose is not to serve the community, you have no business being in business.

9. **The only legitimate reason for government to issue a corporate charter extending special privileges favoring a particular enterprise is to serve a clearly defined public purpose.** That purpose should be clearly stated in the corporate charter and be subject to periodic review.

10. **Public policy properly favors local investors and businesses dedicated to creating community wealth over investors and businesses that come only to extract it.** The former are most likely to be investors and businesses with strong roots in the communities in which they do business. We properly favor them.

David Korten is co-founder and board chair of [YES! Magazine](#), co-chair of the [New Economy Working Group](#), president of the [People-Centered Development Forum](#), and a founding board member of the [Business Alliance for Local Living Economies](#) (BALLE). His books include [Agenda for a New Economy: From Phantom Wealth to Real Wealth](#), [The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community](#), and the international best seller [When Corporations Rule the World](#).

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [12:24 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Saturday, August 14, 2010

[Timothy V. Gatto: We Hold These Truths...](#)

We Hold These Truths...

by Timothy V. Gatto [article link](#)

August 13, 2010 | OpEdNews | LiberalPro

I was on the Michael Medved show yesterday and we got into a discussion of wealth. I told him that a University of Southern California study by Professor G. William Dumhoff made in 2007 and revised in 2010 showed that 80% of Americans retain only 7% of America's wealth. He then asked me if we should "steal money away from the rich and give it to the poor". I replied in the affirmative saying that taxes should be levied on the super-rich, after all, how much do people actually need to live a good life? In the preamble of our Constitution it says;

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

What I can't understand is how we as a nation have come to see such a disparity in the division between upper-class and the middle-class. The Republicans and many Democrats forget that the preamble to the Constitution above says that we should promote the general welfare. Materialism has entered our political system in such a way that our fore-fathers would have a hard time recognizing the United States at all. From the age of enlightenment to the age of the Industrial state we flourished as a people. That was very short-lived. Eventually the class called "The Robber Barons" held sway in this country and made huge financial gains off the backs of our working poor resigned to sweatshops and factories.

When trade unions entered the picture, many of the coal mine owners and factory owners had many of the union organizers killed. The government of the United States even sent troops to break up strikes. Still, the tenacity of the workers gained them grudging acceptance for their unions and the lot of the workers was made a little easier.

Since we have entered this Great Recession, the unions through their own neglect and the use of scabs have made them practically useless. Ronald Reagan busted the backs of the unions when he first came to office and fired the air traffic control workers who had gone on strike. The Bush tax cuts for the wealthy in the hope that the disproved "trickle-down" theory of Ronald Reagan might work (or just to line the pockets of his rich "base") allowed the upper 2% of the population to see monetary gains that have never been equaled in our nation.

Now the Republicans are telling this "middle class" of Americans with their measly 7% of the nation's wealth, that to tax the rich would hurt business and lead to less hiring, this while the wealthy industrialists send our manufacturing base overseas in search of cheap labor. It utterly amazes me that what is left of the middle-class who now are living from paycheck to paycheck, and in some cases no paycheck at all, are swallowing this garbage coming from the Conservative Republicans. That so many people, through no fault of their own have lost their jobs and benefits and are working two or three part-time jobs just to feed their families and keep a roof over their head.

"Stealing from the rich"? Is promoting the general welfare of the people of the United States stealing? Since when have we become so possessive of our wealth that the idea of paying taxes to promote the general welfare of American families becomes so foreign? Are we so materialistic that people making over \$250,000 per year can't pay their fair share of this country's burden? Have they no respect for the men and women that have broken their backs in order that they became wealthy?

This can no longer go on in the manner that it has. Sooner or later (sooner I think) the American people, the 80% that hold 7% of the wealth are going to understand just what is happening to them. There is something written in the Declaration of independence that can cure their grievances if our government cannot.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

This doesn't have to happen. America can right its wrongs and care for the people that live here in the way that a community cares for its least fortunate. We can do better. We must do better or God help us all.

Timothy V. Gatto: Former Chairman of the Liberal Party of America, Tim is a retired Army Sergeant. He currently lives in South Carolina. A regular contributor to OpEdNews, he is the author of *Kimchee Days* or *Stoned Cold Warriors* and is currently at work on a new novel. Tim's political book, *"From Complicity to Contempt"* and *"Kimchee Days"* can be purchased at most online booksellers. The second book in the political series called *"Contempt to Outrage"* is due to come out in September, 2010.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:57 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Rev. Howard Bess: Jesus's Unsettling Lessons for America

Jesus's Unsettling Lessons for America

By the Rev. Howard Bess [article link](#)

August 1, 2010 | Consortiumnews

Editor's Note: Over the past several decades as the United States has embraced free-market Reaganomics and has grown evermore enamored of wealth and power, many Christian churches have tried to bend Jesus's teachings in ways not to offend their patriotic parishioners and well-to-do benefactors.

However, in this guest essay, the Rev. Howard Bess argues that Christian churches should, first and foremost, be true to Jesus's actual teachings -- regardless of how inconvenient or discomfoting they may be to many Americans:

Typical Christians are very selective in their Bible reading. The parts in which believers find affirmation, they are quick to quote. Bible portions that confront them and their chosen lifestyles are conveniently ignored.

Americans are especially adept at sidestepping the teachings of Jesus about wealth, lessons of which there are many and they are not obscure.

Yet, very few ministers dare to preach, say, the parable of the bigger barns found in chapter 12 of the Luke Gospel, which puts the questions of greed and envy into the context of a dispute between two brothers.

It seems their father had died and left an inheritance. By tradition, the oldest son was in charge of the estate and there was a disagreement between the two brothers over how the estate would be divided.

The younger of the two brothers came to Jesus and asked him to arbitrate the dispute. The younger brother wanted his fair share and the older brother was holding out. Jesus refused to play the role of arbiter.

Instead he told a story, prefacing it with a pointed aphorism: "A person's life does not consist of the abundance of his possessions."

Then Jesus told the story. A rich man owned a lot of land. This particular rich man had experienced good crop yields and had filled all his storage barns with grain. His fields produced even more grain, so he decided to build bigger barns. He drew much satisfaction and security from what he owned.

However, the Lord God had something to say about the situation. The first words out of the mouth of God were "You fool! Tonight is the night of your death. When you die, who will then own your barns and grain?"

To grasp the meaning of the story, we need to understand more about the rich men who controlled the area. Rich owners did not live in the community. They lived in a nearby city. From what we now know about the economics of the area, the rich men were investors who had made loans to small farmers at high interest rates.

When poor farmers were not able to repay the loans, investors foreclosed. They became rich men who owned a lot of land and held grain for a better market.

It was an ancient version of modern American agriculture where corporate farming replaced the family farm.

Jesus told the story knowing the young man was aware of the rich, absentee owners, who were generally despised by local people. Jesus's message to the man was clear "do not become like them!"

The Tithing Option

Far too little has been said about Jesus's teachings regarding wealth and the cancer of greed. Christian churches and ministers have ducked the issue by teaching the practice of tithing, giving ten percent of your income to your church or to some charitable cause.

The not so subtle message is: "Tithe, and wealth will be no problem."

The practice of tithing is taught in the Old Testament, but not without dispute or challenge. Also prominent in the Old Testament teachings is that personal wealth is not to be permanent. Old Testament law called for a complete redistribution of wealth every 50th year. The practice is described in the book of Leviticus, but was never practiced.

The only time Jesus mentioned tithing, he condemned those who practiced it. Every minister and every church that teaches and encourages the practice of tithing does so without any support from the person they vow to follow.

At the time of Jesus, economic practice was a form of unregulated capitalism. Opulent wealth abounded and poverty was oppressive and crushing. The story about the "fool" who built bigger barns reflects one portion of the teachings of Jesus about wealth, charity and justice.

In this story, the message is clear: "Do not allow greed to get you."

Grasping Jesus's teachings about wealth has been one of my major tasks in trying to translate his understandings into real-life practices. Some have concluded that Jesus was a socialist, though that argument is not convincing to me.

I have concluded that unregulated capitalism is the devil's workshop. And the greed that drives unregulated capitalism cannot be harmonized with the teachings of the rabbi from Nazareth.

I have come to conclusions of my own about wealth that now govern the use of my possessions, my charitable practices, and the distribution of my estate when I die.

It is not the purpose of this column to share the standards that I have adopted. It is the purpose of this column to challenge every person, who is a follower of Jesus, to look more carefully at the teachings of Jesus about wealth, charity and justice.

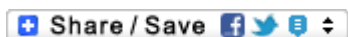
We live in an America that is greed-driven. We glorify the rich and vilify the poor. We complain about taxes and take no note of the public services that we enjoy.

After every speech made by President Obama, he adds "and God bless America."

It is a comment that might have evoked from God the Father of Jesus from Nazareth: "What a bunch of fools."

The **Rev. Howard Bess** is a retired American Baptist minister, who lives in Palmer, Alaska. His e-mail address is hdbss@mtaonline.net.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:41 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Friday, August 13, 2010

We Are The Surety of-and-for Our Family-Community

"**Do no harm, cause no loss**" is the responsibility of an armed citizenry, the "common law of the land" where we knowingly act as the surety of-and-for our family-community(-ies). [MMr]

THE NEW SURVIVAL GUNS — An Introduction

posted by Michael Bane [blog link](#)

March 24, 2010 | Michael Bane Blog

(article previously posted on March 27, 2010 -MMr)

(bold text emphasis added by MMr)

INTRODUCTION

The More Things Change...

Back in the mid-1970s, not long before then-President Jimmy Carter in his cardigan sweater took to the airwaves to bemoan the new American "malaise," a banker-turned-writer named Mel Tappan began one of the most successful firearms books ever written with these words:

"Why, in this age of the urban, industrial, interdependent society, would anyone write a book on guns for survival use — or, perhaps more to the point, why would anyone want to read it?"

That book, SURVIVAL GUNS, has remained in print for more than 30 years and, along with the writings of the late Col. Jeff Cooper, was a primary influence on a whole generation of shooters. **Mel Tappan plugged into a nerve that at the time most people had either forgotten or were just beginning to remember, the sense that perhaps the inevitability of greater days ahead for the most powerful nation on earth was not nearly as certain as we'd been led to believe.** We were reeling from the one-two punch of the 1960s, the vestiges of which linger still, and our humiliating withdrawal from Vietnam, culminating in the nationally televised fall of Saigon in 1975. Americans had been pounded in the OPEC-driven gas crisis — for the first time since World War 2 facing long lines and rationing for what was considered a national birthright — suffered our first post-Great Depression stock market crash and were being merciless ground in the nation's first peacetime inflation, making, as Brad DeLong of the National Bureau of Economic Research noted, "...every business decision a speculation on monetary policy."

Briefly put, we were afraid in a way that this generation of Americans had never been afraid before, and, worse, we feared on a gut level that we had lost control of the great machine that was the United States.

"Without really being aware of it," wrote Tappan, "most of us have subcontracted almost all our life support activities to other people, corporations, governmental bodies and machines. Not only does this circumstance contribute to the sense of frustration which is symptomatic of modern man, it is life-threatening should there be an interruption in those vital services. **We need only project ourselves into a natural disaster, a shipwreck or a riot to realize just how dependent we have become on the uninterrupted functioning of the social order merely to stay alive.**"

What followed Tappan's words was not the much-feared next Great Depression, but a stunning 30-year roller coaster ride through Affluence Land, an unanticipated and unplanned remaking of the world through the technological miracle of lowly silicon, the eighth most common element in the universe. In an interconnected, Internet-driven, YourSpace, FaceBook, Twitter, 24/7 overheated atmosphere, it was easy to forget Tappan's almost quaint warning... not only had we subcontracted almost all our live support to other people, corporations, governmental bodies and machines, we were now doing so at Internet speeds. Our world became sleek, streamlined and global, without much thought to the implications. For even the smallest one-person business, supply lines began to stretch across the world... it didn't matter where you worked, the mantra went, because we were all connected in instantaneous communication and the greatest transportation web in the history of mankind.

The mantra was reflected in our largest businesses as well, whether manufacturing or service or intellectual... the world began, to borrow a phrase from economic analysts Thomas Friedman, “flattening out.” Businesses moved from the old “inefficient” model of maintaining costly “gotta” inventories — gotta store ‘em; gotta count ‘em; gotta throw some away when we change the spec — to “just-in-time.” Instead of a warehouse full of products, for example, waiting to be restocked on store shelves, the products arrived at the store from suppliers “just-in-time,” just hours or even minutes before the shelves ran dry. For American manufacturers, the combination of instant communication, globalization and just-in-time was a godsend, allowing a long chain of supplies from all over the world, usually wherever the supply could be made most cheaply, flowing into factories just in time to be assembled into the newest consumer product.

The American economy prospered at a level that couldn’t even be imagined in the era of Jimmy Carter’s malaise... what could possibly go wrong?

At the same time, we emerged from the Cold War — our game of brinksmanship with a counterpart superpower, the USSR — to a newer, vaguer and infinitely more dangerous battlefield with an enemy we are still struggling to understand. Until the rise of radical Islam, we understood war as defined by Prussian general Carl Von Clausewitz in the early part of the 19th Century, an extension of diplomacy by other means. “War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means,” Clausewitz wrote in *On War*.

Wars sought not to completely overthrow an enemy, but were fought for one of two reasons, to gain specific limited goals — land, resources, sometime populations — or to disarm an enemy and leave him militarily or politically helpless.

While Clausewitz’ writings (and those of the other great military strategists) foreshadowed the world-wide conflicts to come, they left us uniquely unprepared for a different nihilistic view of war, a throwback to older, perhaps more darkly violent, times. Radical Islam doesn’t seek our lands, our resources or our Western lifestyle, nor does it seek to render us helpless. Rather, by the admissions of its leaders, radical Islam seeks the destruction of Western culture and us along with it. It’s a hard concept to get our Western minds around... I’m always reminded of the scene in the alien invasion movie *Independence Day*, where as U.S. President actor Bill Paxton finally is able to ask one of the alien invaders what they wanted us to do. “Die,” replied the alien.

The terrorist attacks of 9-11 ultimately redefined Americans view of America, a punctuation mark between our older, safer world and the dangerous, and dangerously unpredictable, landscape of the future. Add to that two long-running wars, multiple contested elections and a viciously poisonous atmosphere in Washington D.C., an endless media drumbeat of overheated disasters from climate change, financial systems teetering on the verge of collapse, exploding stock market bubbles, the “safe nest egg” of real estate collapsing and as perhaps the final nail in America’s confidence, the spectacle of New Orleans in the grip of Hurricane Katrina, a major American city descending into anarchy as the whole country followed breathlessly on 24/7 news and Internet feeds. All the governmental “safety nets” supposed in place sagged and eventually ripped apart as people, American citizens, struggled and died in the relentless floodwaters. Local government’s response to the spreading disaster was to order all private weapons seized even as murderous gangs ran rampant, and for the first time America was treated to the television spectacle of heavily armored National Guard troops seizing firearms from grandmothers.

The answer to Mel Tappan’s original question — ““Why, in this age of the urban, industrial, interdependent society, would anyone write a book on guns for survival use... or, perhaps more to the point, why would anyone want to read it?” — now seems self-evident.

The irony is that we and our society is now so thoroughly interconnected, so thoroughly bound together in a communications / entertainment / information / stuff web that just a few years back would have seemed the exclusive province of science fiction that we no longer understand, or even see, those connections. Our society has become seamless and we no longer notice the strange noises coming from behind the curtain of the great and powerful Wizard of Oz. One of the my favorite examples of this loss of perspective is an email to a friend of mine, challenging him on his love of hunting. “That is so sick,” the email read. “Why can’t you just get your meat from the grocery store, where it comes from?”

Meat, vegetables, all kinds of food, sanitation, security, information, services of all sorts come from... somewhere else... the grocery store, the supermarket, the internet, the government, the garbage “man,” some entity whose sole function is to provide. And while, as adults — well, ostensibly adults — we understand that behind the provider is a long chain of... something, we’re a little vague on what that something is or how it all comes together to deliver a Big Mac, fries and a 24-hour-a-day Twitter feed. To use another analogy, while we are certain the neck bone is connected to the foot bone, we’re not sure whether that connection is bone, rubber bands or magic. Nor do we particularly care.

Which is just spiffy as long as everything works, for lack of better words, to spec. **We live and function in the most complex society in human history, and it works just fine... until it doesn’t.** The problem with complexity is that it is complex — a lot of things have to happen in a very specific sequence, a dance, if you will, for 100 bottles of aspirin to arrive at your local Wal-Mart at the exact moment the last bottle walks out the door in your reusable, environmentally sound, all-green grocery bag. Multiple that sequence by a thousand, by tens of thousands, by millions of transactions for a modern city to function day-to-day and you start to get a sense of the fragility of modern life.

That fragility only becomes apparent when a link in the chain breaks. It doesn’t actually matter what causes the break — a storm, a plane crashing onto a building, an unpopular court decision, a revolution in a country whose name we’re not sure how to pronounce correctly. When one link of the chain breaks, the entire chain is now at risk... and somewhere at the end of that chain are you and your family.

Which brings us to this book.

It turns out that, yes indeed, we are responsible for our own safety. Despite protestations of the rising Nanny State, the “guarantees” of state, local and federal government, the best efforts of law enforcement officers, nothing much has changed since February 25, 1525 where, in the battle for Pavia in northern Italy a peasant army described as “rabble” and armed with hand-cannons slaughtered the French Mounted Horse, the cream of knighthood and the Age of Chivalry. It was the first, but not the last, time the individual firearm became known as the equalizer, the only way for the peasants to throw off the hundreds of years-old shackles of the brutal knights and their invincible armored war “machines,” the great destriers that were, in effect, the medieval equivalent of tanks.

I recently did a guest appearance on a History Channel special titled AFTER ARMAGEDDON. The show addressed the consequences of a pandemic influenza epidemic, focusing on a family in suburban Los Angeles. **One of the questions I was asked in my capacity as an expert in firearms and self-defense was about the “veneer” of civilization. Under the hellish pressure of collapsing resources and rising death tolls, how long would human behavior remain “civilized” by the standards we recognize today?**

My answer was that it took four days for New Orleans to descend into anarchy. “You’d have thought,” I added, “the veneer would be a little thicker.”

When we peak behind the curtain of the great and powerful Wizard of Oz, we don’t like what we see. I believe that if we sit down, take a deep breath and analyze the world we live in, if we are honest with ourselves we must take steps to protect both ourselves and those under our care.

This book is not a comprehensive guide to preparedness, if there is any such thing. When we produced THE BEST DEFENSE/SURVIVAL, the first television series to ever address these concerns, we were initially overwhelmed with the sheer amount of information. At the end of this book, there’s a reading list that’ll help you get started.

This book is about the primary tool for self-defense, the firearm, and what you need to know to make intelligent decisions about guns, training, self-defense and personal responsibility. Parts of this book will be controversial, and I can guarantee you there will be parts you don’t agree with.

If it makes you think, it has accomplished the job I set out to do.

Mel Tappan [wikipedia](#)

Mel Tappan was a survival consultant, freelance writer, lecturer, and survival editor of Soldier of Fortune magazine. His interest in firearms began at the age of 6 when he received his first .22 rifle. From that time, he was an avid shooter, student of weaponry, and outdoorsman. He was devoted to evaluating firearms, outdoor and survival equipment, storable foods, and communications devices in order to provide assistance, by means of his writings and public lectures, to people who see the value of self-sufficient living and long-term survival planning. [Paladin Press]

Tappan On Survival

by Mel Tappan, with a foreword by Bruce Clayton

One of the greatest books ever written on practical survival is back in print for the next generation of self-reliant citizens! Mel Tappan was the godfather of the modern preparedness movement, and this classic collection of his writings is an indispensable resource for information on how to develop a survival mind-set, identify the best survival locations, store food, maintain communications, select firearms and much more. A new foreword by Bruce Clayton, himself an important figure in the preparedness movement after the publication of his book Life After Doomsday in 1980, describes the unique appeal of Tappan's writings and personality, puts Tappan's role in the survivalist movement in historical perspective and explains why his work is still highly relevant today. [Paladin Press]

Survival Guns

by Mel Tappan

When he wrote Survival Guns in 1979, Mel Tappan demonstrated that having the right weapons for securing food and providing personal defense is the key to sustaining life on an independent basis, whether or not a catastrophe occurs. This is even more true today.

Survival Guns became the standard in its own time and went through several printings. When it finally went out of print, it graduated from a classic to a sought-after collector's item, because the principles and advice in this well-reasoned volume are sound and perennially valuable. Some new guns and some new calibers have become available since this book was first published, but its principles, advice, and value remain unchanged. Having more choices only increases the value of advice on how to choose what is best for you.

As used copies of this book became harder and harder to find, Paladin received numerous requests to bring Tappan's classic back into print. We are pleased to make the most well-known survival firearms book ever published available once more to a new generation of concerned citizens facing the same threats Tappan chronicled during his lifetime. Survival Guns remains the definitive book for anyone interested in the practical use of firearms and related weapons for defense, food gathering, and predator and pest control under conditions of long-term, self-sufficient living. [Paladin Press]

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01/26/2010 | Neithercorp Press

Survival is about more than living, it is about more than believing, it is about KNOWING. Knowing what the world should be, and knowing what the world should not be. Knowing in an intuitive way, beyond simple examination and observation. Knowing from a deeper perspective.

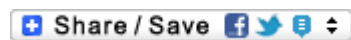
In the end, our survival and the survival of our ideals depends not only on our two hands, our cleverness, or even our fear of death, but the content of each man's heart, and how much of that content he is willing to trust.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:35 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, August 12, 2010

Total Resistance And Withdrawal

MM Book 1 Chapter 2-7

GOD IS UP-LIFTING, He casts none down to Hell !! – media induced stupor vs. the Nation-State as private enterprise [the public-nation ceased in being long ago]; **our politics and policies are private interest in public office !!** – CORPORATE BUSINESS IS THE DEVIL'S SCRIPTURE; Hell is of our own creation !! – **“in the end” *all* of corporatism, its vested claim, privilege, wealth and instrumentation, etc., will be abolished; COMMON-WEALTH will be instituted as “right of God” for all within the Kingdom of God** [Isa 23:18 "And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: ** it shall not be treasured nor laid up **; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing"] – GOD'S SOCIETY OF THE GIFT vs. COMMODIFICATION OF LIFE, including the COG INC. !! [Proverbs 28:8 He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.]

RADICAL [of or from the root or roots; going to the foundation, or source (of all); the extreme edge of truth; **advocation of fundamental social and eco-nomic change, a society of the gift; the establishment of community *by* the elimination of corporatism (its business, monies, nations, etc.) and its systemic claims**] CHRIST-IAN-ITY WILL ***DESTROY*** THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL !! – the systemic punishment of poverty and homelessness; **our life-blood must be the “anointed” [Christ], *NOT* the life-blood of the devil [money]**; ** POVERTY IS THE CRIME, NOT THE PERSONS AFFECTED ** !! – poverty is the result of excess, avarice [claim by others; debt loading; systemic prejudice] !! – criminal-ity is a “product” of our society, people are not born criminals; behavioral problems and/or genetic defect can be identified and “loved” out [healed]; WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR EACH OTHER [*as* God: Christ assumed responsibility for us, and for our sins (our lack of God, our ignorance); evil is the product of our sins, our ignorant negation of our God(-ing), by selfishness] !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 2-8

Social activism is an art-form [an openness to the present; knowledge, footwork]; THE ART OF MENTORING – media is a part of the “everyday” curricula – history is buried in legend, mythology [mythmaking, ie., the nation]; media montages [compressed news] as the whole story – history is made by us: WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAS BEEN DENIED, MYTHOLOGIZED, AND CREATED, WE ARE COMPLICIT !! – active activism is an “expressive” emotive

vs. the consequence(s) of inaction [defeat by the systemic]; inactive [mentative] activism *must* impel us to “loving” action [expressive, yet, NOT of anger], including **total resistance and withdrawal [complicity] from the systemic**; we must *open* our hearts and minds to each other, WE MUST CONSIDER EACH OTHER !! – **we do NOT recognize the evil because we *are* the evil, our very BEING and DOING [enemies of God *in* mind, by our evil works] define us [by their fruits you shall know them]; our systemic *is* us, we are self-defining, and God calls “what we are”, evil [enmity vs. God] !!** – YOU CANNOT WAKE SOMEONE PRETENDING TO BE ASLEEP !! – if we don’t know, we should: OUR PRETENSION [pretext; assertion of claim, right] AND/OR IGNORANCE IS *NOT* AN EXCUSE, IT IS INEXCUSABLE [yet, God will pardon us] !! – again, **“who we are” [our being] determines “what we are” [our doing], and vice versa [esp., the "doing" of others], in a “vicious” circle** [given to, or characterized by vice; evil, corrupt, depraved; harmful; ruined by defects, flaws, or errors; full of faults; very intense, forceful, sharp] !! – **there is NO solution to a “vicious circle”, *only* withdrawal, mercy, and truth !!**

Previously posted March 08, 2010

Mammon or Messiah Book 1 Chapter 2 [web page](#) (widescreen)

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:22 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Edwin Vieira, Jr.: Going to the Root of the Problem

Going to the Root of the Problem

BY Dr. Edwin Vieira, Jr., Ph.D., J.D. [article link](#)

08.11.10 | Silver Bear Cafe

[The following is an expanded version of an address I was asked to present recently. The subject is "radical", in the sense that it digs down to the roots of the problem. But for that very reason it needs airing. Therefore, I put it out here for general consumption, and perhaps consternation. Please add it to the "I told you so" folder in your "favorites" list.]

Once upon a time, not so very long ago, a certain nation was one of the richest countries in the world. [World War II] had left it a creditor nation; it was owed billion[s of] dollars by Britain alone. The derelict state of the European economies gave [this country] an assured market for its exports, while making it difficult to import much from Europe, thus enabling th[is] country to protect its own industries. After the neglect of the thirties there was money for public spending and the country was absorbing a flow of immigrants [who] were not illiterate and unskilled, but scientists, skilled workers, intellectuals.

What country was this? The United States? No - Argentina. [1]

The whole world knows what has happened in Argentina since then, and is still happening there. Informed individuals also know why: because Argentina’s dysfunctional leadership classes adopted faulty economic and political principles. Moreover, Americans can expect much the same thing to happen here, if the same conditions precedent are fulfilled. For although History may never repeat itself exactly, bad principles will bring about similar perverse consequences whenever and wherever they are put into operation. And America’s equally dysfunctional leadership classes have adopted the most dangerous of those principles. So, absent a radical correction in this country’s present course, the Argentina-ization of the United States is very likely to take place.

As in Argentina, America’s present economic and political systems are controlled by arrogant men and women steeped in avarice and ambition, and driven by their appetites for abusive power. The lyric by Enrique Santos Discepolo, master composer of the tango, sums up the situation here just as it did in postwar Buenos Aires:

*Don't you see, you poor fool,
That whoever's got the most dough is right?*

*That honor's sold for cash, and morals for pennies?
That no truth can withstand two bucks? [2]*

Simply put:

Greed, accompanied by every manner of chicanery, both economically in the marketplace and politically in public office, has become this country's one and only "hard currency".

Nowhere does this appear more starkly than in the political arena. Contemporary politicians recognize no limits to their raw power. Observe that I do not say their "authority" - because to the extent that they act outside of the Constitution, they have no legal authority whatsoever (and, in the strictest sense, no power, either). Yet most of them do imagine themselves entirely outside of the Constitution - at least in terms of the constraints it imposes on them when they act under color of law in the guise of "government". Indeed, they openly express their disdain for the Constitution. For instance, recently, Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi was asked at a press conference where in the Constitution Congress finds authorization to enact national health-care legislation. Her response was, "Are you serious? Are you serious?" No one asked whether she was serious - because, of course, everyone knew that she was.

That Representative Pelosi was quite serious is as disturbing as it is revealing. For the Constitution explicitly commands that public officials "shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution". [3] So, every time that officials treat constitutional limitations on their prerogatives as some kind of contemptible joke, they are in effect committing perjury. Yet America is saddled with governments, at every level, comprised largely of individuals for whom the willingness to commit serial perjury in furtherance of their own selfish interests appears to be a condition of obtaining and operating within public office.

Inasmuch as "Oath[s] or Affirmation[s], to support th[e] Constitution" are ultimately made to the American people as a whole, these rogue public officials plainly feel no sense of legal or moral obligation to the people. Doubtlessly they are strengthened in this malign conviction by their belief that the electoral system is so tightly controlled by the two major political parties and their clients and partisans in special-interest groups and the big media that the people can do nothing to change the situation in any event. In this belief, however, they are woefully mistaken.

Political loyalties move on a two-way street. Masses of economically deprived, socially dislocated, and politically disenfranchised, disgruntled, and disgusted people - who have next to nothing left and therefore almost nothing more to lose - are unlikely to entertain any obligation to the political system under which they happen to live, or to the political parties, politicians, and special-interest groups that run that system for their own parochial benefit. When America's economy slips into the free-fall of hyperinflation or depression, impoverished people will rebel. First, against ever-worsening conditions, by demanding that public officials correct the situation. Then, when their protests accomplish little or nothing, they will rebel against incumbent officials at the next election. Finally, when they discover that the two major political parties are really one party with an empty cranium and a pair of duplicitous faces, and that changing the political personalities in office does not ameliorate the conditions that arise out of the government's hare-brained economic policies, they will rebel against this country's governmental institutions as a whole.

A general disdain for legality will become the order of the day. *After all, if public officials refuse to obey the Constitution, which is the sole source of their authority, what obligation has anyone else to obey any law that those officials enact or attempt to enforce?* Now, as many as 200,000,000 to 300,000,000 firearms and an immense store of ammunition are estimated to be held in private hands throughout this country. Can anyone believe that, in the midst of what promises to become the most severe economic crisis of modern times, perhaps of all time, this profusion of armaments - in the hands of people who have been rudely stripped of their financial security, disabused of their political illusions, and driven to the edge of desperation by homelessness, hunger, and loss of hope - will not come into play in the most direct manner possible? Can anyone believe that these people's natural and justified antagonisms against public officials, politicians, and special-interest groups will not turn to rancor - rancor to hatred - hatred to an urge for revenge - and an urge for revenge into actual violent retaliation in more than a few isolated instances and in only a short period of time? Of course, no sensible person wants this to happen. But no sensible person can deny that it could, and very likely would, happen under the posited circumstances.

One can only speculate as to how widespread and intense such violent reactions could become in the course of a catastrophic economic collapse throughout the United States. The circumstances that provoked previous episodes of mass violence in America, however, pale in comparison to what should be expected from hyperinflation or depression today. For instance:

During the six days of the so-called "Watts Riots" of 1965 in Los Angeles, California, over 30,000 adults took to the streets as rioters, 34 people were killed, 1,100 were injured, and upwards of \$100 million worth of property, including some 1,000 buildings, was destroyed, looted, vandalized, or otherwise damaged. The riots were triggered by an altercation incident to a simple arrest for alleged drunk driving - but their suppression required more National Guardsmen and police than the total of American Armed Forces personnel whom President Lyndon Johnson deployed to take over the entire Dominican Republic in that same year. And suppression of the rioters did not address, let alone alleviate, the riots' underlying causes, which were chronic in the community - including such socio-economic problems as high unemployment, substandard living conditions, and a lack of adequate public education, together with political grievances linked to institutionalized racial discrimination in the city.

In the Los Angeles riots of 1992, again the triggering event was relatively trivial - the questionable acquittal of three local police officers on charges of using excessive force to make an arrest. [4] Within hours of the "not guilty" verdicts, rioting broke out and then continued for three days, with live television coverage of arson, assaults, looting, and vandalism by rioters, and suppression of the disturbances by National Guardsmen and police, being broadcast nationwide. Overall, 50 people were killed; more than 4,000 were injured; and some \$1 billion worth of property was destroyed or damaged.

These events teach certain lessons that Americans would be imprudent to imagine do not apply to themselves today:

First, each of the riots in Los Angeles erupted over a relatively minor event - but one which people on the spot linked to long-standing, widespread, and serious animosities derived from social, economic, and political grievances that public officials had failed, neglected, or refused to address. In the course of a major nationwide economic collapse, such events - and many much more serious - will be quotidian and legion.

Second, the Los Angeles rioters obviously believed that mass violence could and should be employed as a justifiable form of political activism, when nothing else worked. In this, one might note, they were in rough agreement with the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence. And the timeless wisdom of the Declaration - that "mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed", but that "when a long train of abuses and usurpations evinces a design to reduce the[People] under absolute Despotism, **it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government**" - will surely gain many more adherents as insufferable economic catastrophe, caused by the nincompoops in the General Government, sweeps across America.

Third, probably very few of the participants (other than perhaps adventitious *semi*-professional looters) expected to gain anything in terms of significant personal profit or meaningful social betterment as a consequence of the upheavals in Los Angeles. Most of the rioters could never have expected the riots to bring about any specific political reforms, but instead engaged in them simply as a staging of anguished, despairing, and defiant political street-theater, the value of which inhered in the unmitigated violence through which the dialogue was communicated to a national audience. People who find themselves in dire economic straits throughout America tomorrow may also be expected to turn to the red-curtained drama of mass violence in order to "send a message" across the footlights. This message, however, will not be sent from a very small part of the country to the rest of it, but from the entire country to the very small part that constitutes the failed economic and political leadership classes. So the level of violence will be far greater, and its focus far narrower and much sharper.

Fourth, although the territory in which they broke out was limited in extent, the riots in Los Angeles were so severe that they could not be put down with only the local police forces available, but instead required deployment of the regular Armed Forces (in the form of the National Guard). Major civil disturbances throughout the entire length and breadth of the United States will render this country ungovernable in short order, even if the entire National Guard were mobilized and none of it defected to the popular side.

Fifth, although those in positions of political power eventually suppressed the Los Angeles rioters with armed force, the cost was exceedingly high in relation to what might have been the bill for nonviolently correcting the worst of the underlying conditions that had spawned the people's grievances before those grievances finally took shape in destructive rebellion. Today, even worse shortsightedness is evident. For *nothing* is being done by the political and economic leadership classes to lift the crushing burden of debt - much of it unconstitutionally incurred in the first place - from the American people's shoulders. Instead, more and more debt is being shoveled into the national account - eventually to be billed to common people through taxation and inflation - precisely in order to "bail out" the very institutions and individuals responsible for the present financial mess.

Sixth, the rioters in 1965 and 1992 were neither organized nor disciplined; and although some were armed, no *concerted and systematic* use of arms throughout the disaffected communities occurred. Neither did the rioters attempt to extend their violence into other areas, so as to attack the people they considered their oppressors in those people's own neighborhoods. Under similar circumstances in the near future, this almost certainly will not be the case. And,

Seventh, in general, the more extensive the underlying socio-economic dislocations, and the more callous the disregard for these problems exhibited by the political apparatus, the more likely the eruption of mass violence that the perpetrators will rationalize as their only effective means to protest, broadcast, and redress their grievances with petitions written in the harsh language of destruction. Which augurs ill for the present time, inasmuch as no one can believe that the socio-economic problems that underlay the riots in 1965 and 1992 in Los Angeles alone were anything but minor in comparison to the dislocations that full-blown hyperinflation or depression - or even the run-ups to those conditions - will bring about in contemporary society throughout America.

Now, if Americans are to deal intelligently with this situation, they must understand the reasons for it. Basically, the reasons relevant here are that one vitally important constitutional principle has been flouted since 1913 and that another such principle is now being systematically disregarded.

The central economic problem plaguing this country since 1913 has been the presence of the Federal Reserve System. Without the Federal Reserve System's debt-currency scheme having effectively supplanted the constitutional monetary system based upon silver and gold, it would have been *impossible* - **not simply improbable, or difficult, but impossible** - for politicians in the public sector and speculators in the private sector to have amassed the staggering level of unpayable, unconstitutional, and unconscionable debt that now bears down upon this country.

The critical political problem now emerging is the absence of a proper "homeland-security" structure based on "the Militia of the several States", which the Constitution itself declares to be "necessary to the security of a free State". Instead of thoroughly organizing and preparing the American people at the State and Local levels to deal with economic and social crises by themselves and with their own resources, public officials are setting up a centralized *para*-military police-state apparatus, which in a major nationwide crisis will impose upon this country the very worst kind of "homeland insecurity" in the style of the East-European communist "people's republics" of the 1950s.

These two problems are inextricably interlinked. The people in political and economic control in Washington, D.C., and New York City may be knaves; but they are not all fools. They know that the Federal Reserve System - indeed, any central-banking scheme that circulates instruments of debt as "currency" - is inherently unstable, and will eventually self-destruct. And they realize that, here in the United States, "eventually" is no longer far off. Either they do not want to replace the Federal Reserve System, or they do not know how to replace it (at least in time). In any event, they have decided to attempt to "manage" its ever-more-destructive effects and thereby somehow "muddle through" with their power, wealth, and social positions intact - and the staggering costs of saving themselves to be imposed on hapless common Americans.

A major breakdown of the monetary and banking systems will, to some degree or other, negatively impact upon every economic transaction and relationship everywhere throughout the United States. So the crisis will inevitably and inexorably entail social unrest on an immense scale. Even if most State and Local police forces are marginally adequate to deal with the unrest that arises within their own jurisdictions, they will need to be coordinated in conformity with some overall national plan, so that an unified national effort can be made to stem the crisis. This will require a central apparatus of

command and control. All the more so if State and Local police prove inadequate to the task. For which reason, more than any other, the Department of Homeland Security was originally created. For part two click below.

Footnotes:

- 1- Nicholas Fraser & Marysa Navarro, *Evita: The Real Life of Evita Perón* (New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996), at 77
- 2- Quoted in Robert D. Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina* (New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1987) at 81
- 3- U.S. Const. art. VI, cl. 3
- 4- The underlying incident was the infamous beating of one Rodney King by four LAPD officers, an horrific videotape of which was aired repeatedly throughout the country.

Edwin Vieira, Jr., holds four degrees from Harvard: A.B. (Harvard College), A.M. and Ph.D. (Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences), and J.D. (Harvard Law School).

For more than thirty years he has practiced law, with emphasis on constitutional issues. In the Supreme Court of the United States he successfully argued or briefed the cases leading to the landmark decisions *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, *Chicago Teachers Union v. Hudson*, and *Communications Workers of America v. Beck*, which established constitutional and statutory limitations on the uses to which labor unions, in both the private and the public sectors, may apply fees extracted from nonunion workers as a condition of their employment.

He has written numerous monographs and articles in scholarly journals, and lectured throughout the country. His most recent work on money and banking is the two-volume *Pieces of Eight: The Monetary Powers and Disabilities of the United States Constitution* (2002), the most comprehensive study in existence of American monetary law and history viewed from a constitutional perspective.

He is also the co-author (under a nom de plume) of the political novel [CRASHMAKER: A Federal Affaire](#) (2000), a not-so-fictional story of an engineered crash of the Federal Reserve System, and the political upheaval it causes.

His latest book is: "[How To Dethrone the Imperial Judiciary](#)" ... and [Constitutional "Homeland Security," Volume One, The Nation in Arms](#) ...

Because the Federal Reserve System will destroy the economy; and the para-military police state will clamp down on society in the aftermath of financial collapse; and then those who have wealth that can be stolen by political looters will have it stolen. Perhaps not as soon as tomorrow. But too soon for comfort.

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Wednesday, August 11, 2010

Stephen Lendman: Political Prisoners in America

Political Prisoners in America

By Stephen Lendman [article link](#)

August 10, 2010 | Information Clearing House

Noted journalist H.L. Menchen described "The most dangerous man to any government (as someone) who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane, and intolerable," yet resisting, he faces recrimination - political imprisonment for his beliefs and activism, officials tolerating no opposition to their authority, no matter how extreme or lawless.

In his book "Race to Incarcerate," Marc Mauer focuses on America's obsession with imprisonment, punishment, and the commodification of prisoners to fill beds - harming society's most vulnerable, targeted for supporting ethnic justice, racial emancipation, and political, economic and social equality across gender and color lines, locked away in the "Land of the Free." In submitting a new report to the UN, National conference of Black Lawyers activist/attorney Stan Willis said:

"The United States is very, very concerned when its citizens begin to raise questions in these international forums, because (America) still prefers to posture itself, including the Obama administration, as the leader of the free world and that they don't have any human rights violations, and they certainly don't have any political prisoners, and we have to dispel that notion in the international community."

American officials don't "want to have these issues reach the world's people. How do you go into Iraq (and) Afghanistan telling people about their democracy when (you've got innocent people) locked down in prison for 30 - 40 years as political prisoners....(activists) against social injustice, colonialism, and/or imperialism, (incarcerated for) their political commitments."

Others are victimized by judicial unfairness, get tough on crime policies, a guilty unless proved innocent mentality, three strikes and you're out, and what the Innocence Project calls "McJustice - the crisis of indigent defense."

Also for being undocumented, violating the racist drug laws, for being Black, Latino or Muslim, to fill prison beds, to satisfy the prison-industrial complex, one of America's fastest growing, including a private gulag, prisons for profit, nearly a score of corporations running dozens of facilities with tens of thousands of prisoners, about 8% of state and federal inmates, expected to increase exponentially in the next decade, the Wall Street Journal saying:

"This multimillion-dollar industry has its own advertising campaigns, architecture companies, construction companies, investment houses on Wall Street, plumbing supply companies, food supply companies, armed security, and padded cells in a large variety of colors."

Over 2.4 million prisoners are held in federal and state facilities, local jails, Indian, juvenile, and military ones, US territories, and numbers held by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), half for nonviolent offenses, many for political activism, the Truth & Justice Foundation (the National Innocence Project) estimating up to 15% wrongfully convicted overall.

Using modern-day slave labor, the Left Business Observer reports that American prisons produce 100% of US military helmets, ammunition belts, bullet-proof vests, ID tags, shirts, pants, tents, bags, and canteens." They also supply 98% of equipment assembly services, 93% of paints and paintbrushes, 92% of stove assemblies, 46% of body armor, 36% of home appliances, 30% of headphones, microphones and speakers, 21% of office furniture, and much more.

Captives in America's gulag, political and other prisoners have languished for decades, under cruel and inhumane conditions. Some die there. Others rot, endure years of solitary confinement, poor medical care, other forms of abuse, and perfunctory parole hearings denying their right to justice.

America's Longstanding Political Repression Agenda

COINTELPRO targeted political activists, J. Edgar Hoover's illegal counterintelligence program to neutralize political dissidents, including communists; anti-war, human and civil rights activists; the American Indian Movement; Black Panther Party; Puerto Rican nationalists; the Chicano Movement; environmentalists, and others challenging state authority - "threats" to "domestic tranquility" for supporting equity and justice, the rule of law, and right over wrong. Today they're called "terrorists."

Yale Law Professor/constitutional scholar Thomas I. Emerson (1908 - 1981) expressed outrage saying:

"The FBI jeopardizes the whole system of free expression which is the cornerstone of our society (raising) the specter of a police state....In essence, the FBI conceives of itself as an instrument to prevent radical social change in America....The Bureau's view of its function leads it beyond data collection into political warfare," protecting privilege from beneficial social change, denying due process and judicial fairness to society's most vulnerable, easy pickings for America's criminal injustice system."

Definitions of Political Prisoners

The Free Dictionary call them people "who have been imprisoned for holding or advocating dissenting political views....for holding, expressing, or acting in accord with particular political beliefs."

In the 1960s, Amnesty International (AI) coined the term "prisoner of conscience," referring to anyone incarcerated for their race, religion, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, beliefs, or lifestyle.

In a London Observer May 28, 1961 article titled, "[The Forgotten Prisoners](#)," AI's founder Peter Benenson (1921 - 2005) defined the term as follows:

"Any person who is physically restrained (in prison or otherwise) for expressing any opinion which he honestly holds and which does not advocate or condone personal violence."

"Open your newspaper any day of the week and you will find a report from somewhere in the world of someone being imprisoned, tortured or executed because his opinions or religion are unacceptable to his government." Millions are affected globally - "by no means (all) behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains, and their numbers are growing."

"That is why we have started [Appeal for Amnesty](#) (AI), 1961. The campaign, which opens today, is the result of an initiative by a group of lawyers, writers and publishers in London, who share the underlying conviction expressed by Voltaire: 'I detest your views, but am prepared to die for your right to express them.' "

Howard Zinn called dissent "the highest form of patriotism. In fact, if patriotism means being true to the principles for which your country is supposed to stand, then certainly the right to dissent is one of those principles. And if we're exercising that right to dissent, it's a patriotic act....One of the great mistakes (about) patriotism....is to think (it) means support for your government....(ignoring America's Declaration of Independence principle that) when governments have become destructive (of life, liberty and equality) it is the right of the people....to alter or abolish" it.

Incarceration as an Instrument of Social Control

In her 1999 article titled, "Prisons, Social Control and Political Prisoners," former political prisoner Marilyn Buck called prisons warehouses to "disappear the unacceptable....to deprive their captives of their liberties, their human agency, and to punish....(to) stigmatize prisoners through moralistic denunciations and indictment based on bad genes - skin color (ethnicity, or other characteristics) as a crime."

Millions of prisoners aren't incarcerated "because they are 'criminal,' but because they've been accused of breaking (a law) designed to exert tighter social control and State repression," scapegoating, demonizing, and criminalizing them for their beliefs and activism.

America's militarized police state brutalizes them, locking them in cages for advocating peace, not war, for their courage to resist injustice, defend freedom, equality, and human rights, and believe another world isn't just possible but struggling for it nonviolently is noble and needed.

In a 1986 *Quinn v. Robinson* ruling, the US Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit differentiated between political and other crimes, saying:

"It is the fact that the insurgents are seeking to change their governments that makes the political offense exception applicable, not the reasons for wishing to do so or the nature of the acts by which they hope to accomplish that goal."

In other words, advocating beneficial social or political change is criminal, turning justice on its head, the same kind that imprisons lawyers for defending unpopular clients to intimidate others not to try.

In the Vol. 18, 2002 Harvard BlackLetter Law Journal, J. Soffiyah Elijah headlined, "The Reality of Political Prisoners in the United States: What September 11 Taught Us About Defending Them," saying:

In a post-9/11 climate, they "and their lawyers have been targeted for renewed abuse," constitutional protections not shielding against spurious charges, corrupt prosecutors, hanging judges, and long imprisonments, many under extremely harsh conditions, including long-term isolation, over time producing severe anxiety, panic attacks, irrational anger, social withdrawal, and a profound sense of hopelessness and despair, for many a totally dysfunctional state and inability ever to live normally outside of confinement.

Always unfair, American justice is now worse than ever, unjustly affecting undocumented immigrants, Blacks and Latinos, anyone of color, Muslims for their faith, ethnicity, activism and prominence, and those challenging state authority, its imperial marauding, and sweeping homeland repression, turning America into a police state.

Activists were always targeted, noted civil liberties writer Stephen Kohn documenting nearly 1,000 cases in his 1994 book titled, "American Political Prisoners: Prosecutions Under the Espionage and Sedition Acts." Today, it's under the 1996 Effective Death Penalty and Anti-Terrorism Act, and post-9/11 ones, including:

-- the 2001 USA Patriot Act, eroding Fifth and Fourteenth Amendment due process rights; First Amendment free expression and association ones; and Fourth Amendment freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures, enabling vast extralegal surveillance powers to destroy the right of privacy;

-- the 2001 Military Order Number 1, letting the president usurp authority to capture, kidnap, arrest and torture accused terrorists, holding them indefinitely without charge; trying them in Military Commissions with no right of appeal; denying them due process and judicial fairness;

-- the 2002 Homeland Security Act, a sweeping anti-terrorism bill creating a national Gestapo, centralizing unprecedented military and law enforcement power in the executive branch, enhanced by US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), established in 2002 to militarize the homeland, Canada, Mexico, Gulf of Mexico, Straits of Florida, and, for the first time, let troops deploy on US streets to protect "national security," and

-- other repressive laws, Executive Orders, National and Homeland Security Presidential Directives, and other measures targeting anyone threatening state authority by any means, including those advocating nonviolent political or social change.

Using previously unavailable FBI, Bureau of Prisons and other DOJ divisions files, Kohn covered earlier cases, including activists for "blowing the whistle" on WW I participation, unionists fighting for worker rights, pacifists, socialists, and others for having unpopular political or religious beliefs.

In three parts, he chronicled the history and use of the law to imprison anyone for their political or religious views, described prison life in their own words, and covered hundreds of people affected, discussing their beliefs, length of imprisonment, and treatment.

Earlier through today, they've been targeted, hunted down, rounded up, held in detention, kept in isolation, denied bail, restricted in their right to counsel, provided the "McJustice" kind, tried on secret evidence, convicted on spurious charges, given long sentences, then incarcerated and abused in America's gulag, its hell, for Dante its entrance inscription saying "Abandon hope all ye who enter here," the fate of many locked away in the "land of the free."

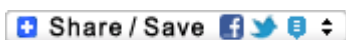
A Final Note

On July 15, political prisoner Marilyn Buck was released from the federal prison medical center in Carswell, TX and paroled to New York. Three weeks later on August 3, she died.

She served 25 years of an 80 year sentence for opposing racial injustice and US imperialism. Late last year, she was diagnosed with uterine sarcoma, a rare aggressive cancer that took her life. To the end, she heroically maintained her beliefs.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. Also visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the [Progressive Radio News Hour](#) on the [Progressive Radio Network](#) Thursdays at 10AM US Central time and Saturdays and Sundays at noon. All programs are archived for easy listening.

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Justine Sharrock: How the Military Destroys the Lives of Soldiers Who Try to Tell the Truth

How the Military Destroys the Lives of Soldiers Who Try to Tell the Truth

By Justine Sharrock [article link](#)

August 11, 2010 | AlterNet

Last week, Representative Mike Rogers called for the execution of military whistleblower, Private Bradley Manning. His crime? Sharing the "Collateral Murder" video and the classified Afghanistan "war logs" with Wikileaks, which exposed the truth behind the failing war in Afghanistan, Pakistan's cooperation with the Taliban, and potential war crimes. The 22-year-old Army intelligence analyst said he felt it was "important that it gets out...I feel, for some bizarre reason...it might actually change something." He is currently in jail at Quantico, on suicide watch, and is facing up to 50 years in prison for exposing information the American public has the right to know.

"The government is engaging in selective prosecution to ensure that employees keep their mouths shut," says Stephen Khon, a lawyer specializing in whistleblowing cases. "All of a sudden the whistleblower becomes public enemy number one. There is no proportionality."

Manning leaked the information anonymously with the assurance that his name would never be released, but all the same he has been accused of seeking his “15 minutes of fame.” Manning specifically said, “I just want the material out there...I don't want to be a part of it.” His name only became known after hacker-turned-reporter Adrian Lamo ratted him out. Before going to Wikileaks, Manning tried, unsuccessfully, to report the information to his officer. He explained that he “immediately took that information and ran to the officer to explain what was going on...he didn't want to hear any of it... he told me to shut up and explain how we could assist the FPs in finding more detainees....” Yet now he is being denounced for not handling the matter internally.

Regardless of whether he is found guilty and sentenced to prison, Manning's life will be irreparably destroyed. “If you are deemed a whistleblower in the Army, there is a very good chance of it ruining not only your career but your life,” says David Debatto, a U.S. Army counterintelligence special agent who saw several such instances while serving in Iraq in 2003. Manning was already “pending discharge” when he made the complaints, but now, even if he isn't charged, he will most likely be dishonorably discharged. This will mean a loss of all benefits and difficulty getting a decent civilian job, a bank loan or a lease.

Manning is not the first such military whistleblower to face serious repercussions and retaliation; not just from the military, but from the government, fellow soldiers, friends back home and even the general public and the media. The military is infamous for trying to silence soldiers who speak out against the war. Each whistleblower who is publicly denounced and punished acts as a prohibitive warning silencing any other soldiers contemplating coming forward.

Blowing the whistle while overseas is particularly risky. You are completely under the control of the military. As of mid-2008, almost 3,000 soldiers have filed complaints with the Inspector General's office for retaliation against them when they tried to expose information. That number does not include the multitudes who were too intimidated—or simply too despondent—to make reports. At their own discretion, commanders can enact “non-judicial punishments,” such as imposing a diet of bread and water, enforcing longer work hours, and requiring intensive physical activity like hauling sandbags or running for hours in full gear. Soldiers can refuse such punishment, but the other option is trial by court martial for the alleged offense.

There have been reports of soldiers being physically threatened and put in dangerous situations without their weapons. There is fear of being “suicided” or “accidentally” killed by friendly fire. Some soldiers have ended up in psychiatric hospitals. In June 2003, Sergeant Frank Ford, working as a counterintelligence agent in the California National Guard 223rd Military Intelligence battalion, reported five instances of torture and detainee abuse that he witnessed. They included asphyxiation, mock executions, lit cigarettes being forced into a detainee's ears, and arms being pulled out of sockets.

Upon hearing the complaint, his commanding officer, Captain Victor Artiga, said he was delusional and ordered a psychiatric examination. When the psychiatrist assessed Ford as mentally healthy, Artiga stormed down there and told her it was a military intelligence issue and that the form had to be changed immediately. Thirty-six hours later, Ford was on a gurney getting shipped out on a flight to a military mental ward in Germany. The psychiatrist, who ended up accompanying him, apologized and explained that she thought it was safer for him to get off the base.

All of the evaluations at the various military psychiatric wards Ford was sent to during the next several months deemed him mentally stable. Eight months after blowing the whistle, he was honorably discharged. Although this is not a common occurrence by any means, there are numerous accounts of soldiers being sent for psychological assessments for combat stress after they blew the whistle. Some have spent months in mental wards and years trying to clear their records.

In the vast majority of these cases, the soldiers first reported abuse to their commanders, and were ignored. Take the infamous Abu Ghraib detainee abuse scandal, which was leaked through graphic photographs showing the prisoners staked in naked pyramids, leashed like dogs, and most iconic, the hooded man standing on a box with his arms outstretched attached to electrodes and leashed like a dog. Numerous soldiers had filed complaints with their officers long before the whistleblower, Joe Darby, handed in the photos, which were eventually leaked to the press. Stephen Hubbard reported the abuse to his squad leader, Robert Elliot, but was told that without the photographic evidence in hand, there was not enough proof. It took Darby going outside the chain of command, via the military's Criminal Investigative Division (CID), to get any response.

Even so, when the military launched their official investigation, soldiers who cooperated by coming forward with information about the abuse were retaliated against. Sergeant Samuel Provance had known about the ongoing abuse, but had been too scared to report it before the photos were released to the press, and figured the reports would go nowhere. Once the CID asked soldiers for more information, he thought it was safe to come forward. But his frankness earned him a demotion, threats of jail time, and endless humiliation and harassment. He lost his security clearance because, as they said, his “reliability and trustworthiness” had been “brought into question.” During briefings, officers made an example of him, telling soldiers he was a liar and a traitor.

One soldier, Andrew Duffy, who worked at Abu Ghraib long after the abuse had supposedly ended, made numerous complaints about abuse and even wrongful deaths to his officers and the Inspector General’s office, yet he was met with silence. “If you complained about someone in that type of environment, they would kick your ass, and there’s no way to be protected over there,” Duffy explains. “You would be screwed. And nothing would even come of it.”

Things certainly don’t stop once soldiers leave the military. Lieutenant Commander Matthew Diaz, a Navy JAG officer, was imprisoned for leaking the names of the Guantanamo detainees. Despite the Supreme Court ruling that granted detainees habeas corpus rights, the military was still denying lawyers’ requests for the names that were needed to actually file cases. So, in 2005, on the last night of his tour, Diaz anonymously mailed a list of the names in a Valentine’s Day card to a lawyer at the Center for Constitutional Rights. The lawyer gave the list to the judge’s clerk who was working on her case, who in turn handed them over to the Justice Department, thus initiating an FBI investigation. Diaz was court-martialed, convicted on four felony counts, and sentenced to six months in a Navy brig. He lost his law license, and with a felony conviction on his record, faced a litany of problems, including being blocked from housing, loans, employment, and, in some states, even voting. When he was accepted to teach at a New York City public school, the board of education denied him the job at the last minute when he failed the background check.

The Abu Ghraib whistleblower, Joe Darby, had to go into a quasi-witness protection program once he returned home. A security assessment of his hometown, Cumberland, Maryland, where most of his Army Reserve unit was from, deemed it too dangerous for him to return. “The overall threat of harassment or criminal activity to Darby is imminent,” read the report. His house was too close to the road; he could easily be shot. It wasn’t the military, but people back home who were out to get him.

Linda Comer, one of the locals the CID interviewed for its security assessment, told me. “We do justice in our own way. No one would rent to him or sell him a house. If they did, someone would go destroy it. I’m not sure if it will ever be safe for him to come back.” To some of his old neighbors, what Joe Darby did worse than the abuse. Just as with Manning, his personal character was dragged through the mud. He has been publicly called a rat, a traitor, un-American and unpatriotic.

Like Manning, Darby was criticized for not following proper protocol in reporting the abuse. While Darby is blamed for publicly releasing the information, most people don’t realize that it was Bill Lawson, the uncle of one of the accused soldiers, who actually leaked the photos to the press.

With so many examples about retaliation against military whistleblowers, Private Bradley Manning no doubt knew what he was up against. Even if he didn’t think it would go as far as court martial—or even the death penalty—he knew what would happen to him. All the same he was willing to take that risk. For that, he is a hero.

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Gareth Porter: Serial Denial and the Permanent War System

Serial Denial and the Permanent War System

by Gareth Porter [article link](#)

August 11, 2010 | CommonDreams

Two months ago, I wrote that the Obama administration and the U.S. command in Afghanistan faced an "[Iraq 2006 moment](#)" in the second half of 2010 - a collapse of domestic political support for a failed war paralleling the political crisis in Bush's Iraq War in 2006. Now comes Republican Congressman Frank Wolf to make that parallel with 2006 eerily precise.

Wolf published a [letter to President Obama](#) last week calling for the immediate establishment of an "Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group". It would be the son of the Iraq Study Group. Wolf is the Congressman who authored the legislation in 2005 creating the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group to come up with fresh ideas for that failing war. The Wolf proposal came nearly a year after American public had turned against the war decisively in January 2005, when support for the war fell to 39 percent.

The U.S. public had withdrawn its support because it had become obvious that the war was a failure. The Bush administration had overthrown the Saddam Hussein regime only to unleash a violent Sunni-Shi'a sectarian power struggle that the U.S. military couldn't control. Even worse, the U.S. military presence was objectively supporting one side in that power struggle by building up a clearly sectarian military and police sector, even as it pretended by the honest broker between Sunni and Shi'a.

By 2006 it had become apparent even to the political elite that the war was failing and that something had to be done. But for war supporters like Wolf, the idea was not to find a way out of a criminally stupid war but to tweak the war strategy so that the administration could rebuild public support for it.

The problem with the Baker-Hamilton group was not that it didn't have the information it needed to call for end to the U.S. war. Bob Woodward's [The War Within](#) reveals that the commander of all U.S. ground forces in Iraq, Pete Chiarelli, told the Iraq Study Group that the sectarian character of the Shi'a-dominated Iraqi government was the primary problem. And the officer in charge of training the Iraqi army, Gen. Martin Dempsey, told the group that, without Sunni-Shi'a reconciliation, "[T]here are not enough troops in the world to provide security."

Elementary logic would have suggested that with Sunni-Shi'a reconciliation there would be no need for U.S. troops and that without it, U.S. troops would be unable to change the situation. Either way, the U.S. military presence was irrelevant to the future of Iraq. After nearly four years of fighting, with enormous casualties on both sides, the U.S. military had succeeded only in helping Iran consolidate Shi'a rule in Iraq.

Nevertheless the [Study Group's report](#) (pdf) went along with an indefinite continuation of the U.S. military role in Iraq.

Now we have the same nightmare of a stupid war that the political class can't bring itself to end.

Wolf says he's been talking with retired figures in the national security elite, who tell him that "our Afghanistan policy is adrift". And he warns of a "palpable shift in the nation's mood and in the halls of Congress" on the war. He notes that 62 percent of the American public in a July 2010 poll said the war is "going badly".

So now Wolf proposes the same kind of bipartisan study group that he says helped rebuild support for the Iraq war to come up with "fresh strategies" for the war in Afghanistan. Wolf makes no effort to hide his hope to "reinvigorate national confidence in how America can be successful" in Afghanistan.

Wolf is the poster child for the deep denial on U.S. wars practiced by a very large segment of the political elite. On one hand, his proposal is the clearest evidence of the desperation that has overtaken Washington about the palpable failure of Obama's war. But on the other hand, Wolf suggests that all we need is a group of "respected" war supporters to offer a new strategy for the Afghan War to be back on the road to victory again.

This refusal to face up to reality that the United States cannot succeed in Afghanistan, despite all the evidence to the contrary, suggests that something much deeper is going on here. Wolf and his fellow deniers in the political elite are not just refusing to give up on the specific war in Afghanistan. They are doing it because they are desperately clinging to the broader system of global military hegemony which impels the U.S. national security state to continue that war.

In his latest book, [Washington Rules](#), historian Andrew Bacevich points to this largely un-discussed aspect of recent U.S. wars. The "Washington rules" to which the title refers are the basic principles of U.S. global policy that have been required beliefs for entrance into the U.S. political elite ever since the United States became a superpower. The three rules are U.S. global military presence, global projection of U.S. military power and the use of that power in one conflict after another.

Bacevich suggests that personal and institutional interests bind the U.S. political elite and national security bureaucrats to that system of global military dominance. The politicians and bureaucrats will continue to insist on those principles, he writes, because they "deliver profit, power and privilege to a long list of beneficiaries: elected and appointed officials, corporate executives and corporate lobbyists, admirals and generals, functionaries staffing the national security apparatus, media personalities and policy intellectuals from universities and research organizations."

That description of the problem provides a key to understanding the otherwise puzzling serial denial by the political elite on Iraq and Afghanistan. It won't do much good for anti-war people to demand an end to the war in Afghanistan unless they are also demanding an end to the underlying system that has now produced quasi-permanent American war.

Gareth Porter is an investigative historian and journalist on U.S. national security policy who has been independent since a brief period of university teaching in the 1980s. Dr. Porter is the author of four books, the latest of which is [Perils of Dominance: Imbalance of Power and the Road to War in Vietnam](#) (University of California Press, 2005). He has written regularly for Inter Press Service on U.S. policy toward Iraq and Iran since 2005.

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Tuesday, August 10, 2010

Linh Dinh: Wordless Masses

Wordless Masses

by Linh Dinh [article link](#)

August 10, 2010 | CommonDreams

Camden, NJ a city of 80,000 people, has three public libraries. Last week came news that these three branches may close for good at the end of this year, with most of the books given away or destroyed. This, in the city where America's greatest poet, Walt Whitman, spent two decades, and where he is buried.

Camden is one of the poorest cities in America, with an extremely high illiteracy, high school drop out and murder rates. Officially, unemployment is at 25%, so you can double that figure. Not too long ago, Camden, like America itself, was an industrial powerhouse. During World War II, it had the biggest shipyard in the world, employing 40,000 people. Campbell Soup's main factory was here. RCA Victor was here. All that remains of this industrial heritage is a huge downtown mural showing smiling workers engaging in productive activities, quite a contrast to the mostly dazed, overweight, well tattooed and underwear flashing citizens strutting back and forth on surrounding streets. Like Detroit, Camden is an extreme example of our industrial and social disintegration, but look around you, there are incipient Camdens and Detroits all over this country.

The most impressive structure in today's Camden is, no surprise here, its baseball stadium, just like in Detroit, where Comerica Park is the jewel of a downtown that flaunts several completely empty skyscrapers. A few blocks away, the one-dollar houses sprout. Hey, we may be going down the toilet, but our stadia are still the best! Circuses are not just necessary to cheer up and anesthetize a disheartened and increasingly angry populace, but in America, our nightly sporting contests also have ideological contents. The American dream, the idea that anyone can rise to the top, even a ghetto youth or a remotest farm boy, is now only alive in the sporting realm. It is our remaining proof that discipline and perseverance will pay off. In spite of regular scandals of doping, crooked refs and other forms of cheating, the playing field is more or less level, where anyone can kick anyone else's butts if he's truly superior. Sport is also continuity, hence the fans' obsession with records, past legends and traditions. Watching sports, we can pretend that nothing has changed, that we're still a country with the disposable income and leisure to enjoy things that don't matter. And true enough, during the two or three hours of watching, real life catastrophes and personal worries are kept at bay. Nothing is allowed to interfere except the SUV, fast food and beer commercials. Nothing has changed.

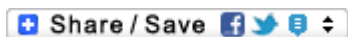
American workers cannot compete with Chinese. This has much less to do with any cultural factor, it's not so much because we're less industrious or disciplined, we can't compete simply because we're not slaves. Transplanted to America, a Chinese wouldn't be able to compete with his clone in China. China is a totalitarian country where unions are disallowed, and this helpless, disempowered work force is exactly what the Capitalists want. Hence the seemingly odd marriage between corporate bosses and these "Communists." The real meaning of globalism, its true aim, is to exploit as ruthlessly as possible the workers, and also the environment, the earth, so that a few fat cats at the top can become insanely wealthy. If Chinese workers had a voice, they wouldn't put up with, as Johann Hari described in a recent article, having "to work and live in giant factory-cities that they almost never leave. Each room sleeps 10 workers, and each dorm houses 5,000. There are no showers; they are given a sponge to clean themselves with. A typical shift begins at 7.45am and ends at 10.55pm." Many have literally drop dead from overwork. Sounds just like conditions in America itself, before our unions gained the upper hand after decades of being beaten up and shot at by State Troopers and National Guardsmen. In 1941, just before the U.S. entered the war, Bethlehem steel workers had to go strike to demand, among other concessions, a 10 minute lunch break and a "welfare room," where they could shower and change into clean clothes to go home at the end of the day.

With most of our factories crumbling, our unions are no longer players in national politics, and American workers who once manned assembly lines now bag foreign merchandises, or serve up transfat specials with a crooked smile. As wage slaves, we belong to no teams save the ones we see on television. Falling behind on cable bills, we can still cheer for these sweating millionaires, our ideal, hallucinated selves, as they can still compete and be successful more or less half of the time.

Previous generations battled management, police or troops for each concession. Today, we show our defiance by mutilating ourselves and dropping our pants a few inches. Many hurl racist insults at the President or those of the wrong faiths or shades. Most of us simply can't recognize our true enemies, and the ones who do feel helpless to make these criminals, and their enablers, nearly all of our bobbing head politicians, pay. Fed up with Coke, we elect Pepsi. Pissed off at Pepsi, we switch back to Coke. Since our rulers hold all the cards, they don't really mind our rising anger, which they can manipulate and steer through the mainstream media. Trawling new depths of absurdity, these mind control apparatuses derange and rob us of any sense of proportion. In this economy, bullshit shines. Breaking news: Obama's grin found blossoming from Britney's armpit! Details at eleven!

Linh Dinh born in Vietnam in 1963, came to the US in 1975. He is the author of two books of stories and five of poems, with a novel, *Love Like Hate*, scheduled for July. He's tracking our deteriorating socialscape through his frequently updated photo blog, [State of the Union](#).

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Monday, August 9, 2010

[Allan Badiner: How Facebook Betrayed Users and Undermined Online Privacy](#)

How Facebook Betrayed Users and Undermined Online Privacy

By Allan Badiner [article link](#)

August 5, 2010 | AlterNet

In just six years Facebook has crossed the threshold of 500 million users. In the past nine months it has doubled in size and is now the number one most visited Web site in the world, surpassing Google. Facebook's motto is "Making the world open and connected," where a lone voice can have a powerful impact, as evidenced this year by one activist's post on Facebook that sparked a demonstration of 12 million people against the Revolutionary Forces of Columbia (FARC), which had been terrorizing Colombian citizens for years.

But along with its policy of openness and potential for social change, Facebook has repeatedly come under fire for its lax policies toward the privacy of its members.

Behind the Wall

Facebook members have a "wall" where they can post pictures and information (essentially their own web page), chat with each other, and read the latest on everyone in "The Feed." But behind the wall, users are creating a cumulative data repository of all the relationships in the entire world and the intimate details of everyone's lives. The databases and algorithms employed at Facebook to store, crunch, and make inferences about you are far greater holders of data than any government agency.

Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg has often claimed to be a champion of privacy and promised, "we will never sell your information." Nevertheless, many users were shocked to discover late last year that their names and profile pictures, along with basic information about them, had been made public. At the heart of the storm is not the complexity of controls on Facebook, although that was an issue. The anger was about Facebook sharing personal information in new ways without prior permission from its users.

Ironically, Facebook has made an international impact it had not intended. German officials launched legal proceedings against Facebook over its policy of saving information about people who aren't members of the social network but have various details posted on it thanks to their friends on Facebook. Following an investigation by the Canadian Privacy

Commissioner, Facebook implemented new privacy policies. In the U.S., members of Congress and the Federal Trade Commission called for more regulation and Zuckerberg was all but forced to agree to more privacy controls. In June, four U.S. senators wrote to Zuckerberg telling him they were concerned about Facebook's privacy practices.

The Beacon

Facebook first aroused controversy on its violations of privacy with its use of web beacons. Web beacons are tiny image files that, when combined with small text files called "cookies," will track your activities on other sites and automatically send information about you, including keystrokes, to the originating Web site. Facebook designed them to broadcast back to users and their friends what actions Facebook members took on participating Web sites. Users were not informed that data on their activities at other sites was flowing back to Facebook, nor were they given the option to block that information from being transmitted.

Lawsuits were filed, and even MoveOn moved into the issue. Facebook announced that it would allow people to opt out of the use of beacons, and Zuckerberg apologized for the controversy. Facebook ultimately settled a class action lawsuit and announced it would completely shut down the beacon program.

Instant Personalization

But the storm was only beginning to build. The controversy rose to a roar in May, centered on unilateral and sudden changes to Facebook policies that severely limited what users could keep private. The Instant Personalization pilot program that Facebook created spins users' personal interests into public Web sites that are searchable and available for the world to see, and share their data with other Web sites such as Yelp, Microsoft and Pandora.

Facebook not only forced users to opt out rather than opt in if they wanted their information shared, but required users to delete information from their pages if they didn't want to share it publicly. Adding injury to insult, embarrassing technical glitches came to light that exposed the personal messages of some users.

After considerable clamor, Facebook allowed you to opt out of Instant Personalization. But it isn't simple and it requires you to delete all of your biographical information containing your general preferences about ideas and products, i.e., all of your "likes."

Asked why Facebook doesn't simply make such pilot programs as Instant Personalization usable on an opt-in basis, Zuckerberg dodged the question and said only that doing so would create "a lot more friction."

Open Graph

At a developer conference, Zuckerberg recently announced the end of Facebook's policy of not allowing third-party sites to store and cache any data for more than 24 hours. This led to a discussion about what Facebook calls the Open Graph, through which Facebook plans to connect disparate corners of the web with the preferences of its users. "If you mapped out all the connections between people and the things they care about," says Zuckerberg, "it would form a graph that connects everyone together." "Yelp will map the part of the graph relating to small businesses, Pandora will take on the music part, and Microsoft will handle document sharing," Zuckerberg said. And Facebook owns the graph.

All partner sites can use "social plugins" that record the "likes" of users and their friends, and make the data available to advertisers. For example, you can click the Like button on a movie at the Amazon-owned Internet Movie Database, and your preference will be stored on your Facebook profile. The profiles or identities of Facebook users slowly cease to be just what they constructed on Facebook, and are shaped by their behavior elsewhere on the web. Web sites will begin to tailor themselves to individual users.

Not everyone is complaining about the lack of privacy on Facebook. NPR reported that credit collection agencies start their pursuit of debtors with the most promising source of all the information they need: Facebook. They search the Open Graph for keywords or "friend request" until they have access to a subject's inner circle.

Additionally, 30 percent of employers have rejected applicants because of things they've found on Facebook and other social networks, according to David Kirkpatrick.

In fairness, Facebook has done a good job with ads—they are minimal in number and unobtrusive. But these ads are only foot-soldiers for the advertising invasion they have been planning.

Facebook's True Face

Facebook is both an infomediary and an intermediary. It occupies a pivotal position as the preeminent hub in the new information economy, and it is also the primary custodian of more information than has ever before been collected about human beings. As intermediaries and hosts for our communications with lovers, family members, friends, and colleagues, social network providers have access to extremely sensitive information, including data gathered over time and from many different individuals.

Despite Homeland Security, Google Analytics, and Facebook's Data Team, people still hold to the ideal that they are free and have choice in their own lives. It is reasonable to expect Facebook to respect this democratic ethic and voluntarily assume a kind of fiduciary duty to its users. This kind of duty has to come before the realization of Facebook's dreams for reengineering mobile communications and the web to become a more people-centric and integrated community. The Facebook motto, "Making the world open and connected," may need to be thought through more carefully in terms of how they "make" it happen, and in what ways the citizens of the world want it to be "open" and "connected."

While Mark Zuckerberg may believe in a concept called "radical transparency," Peter Eckersley, senior staff technologist at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, has called for Facebook "to stop acting as if they have a mission to make all of our private lives public."

Electronic Frontier Foundation is also promoting a Bill of Privacy Rights for Social Network Users, including the right to be clearly informed about the options for privacy, what information is being shared to whom, and notified when any legal entity requests information about them. The bill also declares that users retain control over the use and disclosure of their data, and that they should have the right to have all personal data removed from social network servers if they decide to leave the service.

The Future of Facebook

And leaving the service is what a small but growing number of people have in mind. "[Quit Facebook Day](#)," an online protest started by Canadian users, took place a few weeks ago—and there may be more. Over 35,000 Facebook users have pledged to permanently erase their profiles from Facebook's database. They cannot, however, take their data with them. It was only last year that Canada asked Facebook to cease holding on to personal information from deactivated accounts, which is illegal under Canadian law. The changes that Facebook is making to quell the outcry, inadequate as they may seem, are possibly more a result of pressure from foreign governments than anything else. There has been "unusually strong international pressure from policymakers to force Facebook to change," says Jeffrey Chester of the Center for Digital Democracy.

Will this upset over privacy slow down the meteoric growth of the company? It is interesting that Facebook gained only 320,000 new U.S. users in June after a blockbuster gain in May of more than 7.8 million. And a new report from the American Customer Satisfaction Index ranks Facebook in the bottom 5 percent of social media sites. In the survey, users complained about privacy concerns, interface changes, navigation problems, and aggressive advertising.

Mark Zuckerberg takes it all with a smile and does not seem overly concerned about the ruckus, or the severity of Facebook's PR debacle. Zuckerberg and Facebook have been the focus of at least two books and are now the subject of a film, *The Social Network*, directed by David Fincher and based on technology reporter David Kirkpatrick's account of the Facebook phenomenon. Zuckerberg says he doesn't read a lot of the press, books or articles about Facebook and does not plan to see the movie. To the great modern prophet of staying connected, being disconnected sometimes is a good thing.

“Over time,” says Zuckerberg, “people will remember us for what we build and how useful it is to them.” Looking at the low number of actual defectors and the onrush of new users, Zuckerberg’s confidence is not misplaced. But, sooner or later, Facebook will have to learn that disclosure of our most personal information should be on an opt-in rather than opt-out basis. As blogger Chris Messina stresses, your identity is too important to be owned by any one company.

In fact, most users of Facebook are hoping that the company will act wisely and in a fashion that demonstrates a respect for user privacy. The challenge is that Facebook is on a firm trajectory of personalizing the web, which by nature requires information from users. At the same time, advertisers have ceased to be interested in buying space on Web sites—and now want to access user profiles. While not exactly locked in, users have invested Facebook with a great deal of data, and they tend not to want to close their accounts. This fact is not lost on Facebook.

Way Forward

Privacy is on the front burner for a reason: social network providers are eager to have the income from marketers and advertisers that help them sell their products in the most efficient way possible. This means that the data users are so eager to keep private has value. The Faustian bargain people make with social networks—your personal information for a platform to share it on—has been changing. Facebook and other networks are collecting far more information about their users than ever before.

That information, and aggregated versions of it, can and is being sold to marketers one way or another. Once you share your data on a network—even with your friends—you cease to own it. The social networks are scrambling to provide clever “products” and ways for you to input more and more personal information on their servers. In the scale of what they are collecting, the benefit to users who have given up most of their privacy is negligible.

Why should users give Facebook their information, preferences, relationship flow chart, and the ability to infer what it isn’t told directly? Users have almost no control over how information about them is used, or who ends up with the rights to use it in the future. But imagine how much users would share if they were building for themselves an income stream with their data. Imagine if Facebook revolutionized the industry and partnered with users to monetize their personal information, and in so doing the users took a share of it.

Trust is crucial for the sustained success of social networks. It may seem to Zuckerberg that Facebook users are tolerating the erosion of it well and keeping their accounts. But as soon as a viable alternative begins to pick up momentum, a mass exodus could ensue. Facebook could easily and quickly become the new MySpace. First, the early adopters achieve a critical mass at another new networking site. Then, the next wave of the techno savvy looking to bail start to migrate. And a little while later, only mom and dad are left on Facebook wondering where the kids went.

Viable alternatives are already springing up. A new network has been touted in the media that allows users to fully control the information they share by setting up their own personal servers, called “seeds.” Raphael Sofaer, co-founder of [Diaspora](#), says that centralized networks like Facebook are not necessary. “In our real lives, we talk to each other,” he said. “We don’t need to hand our messages to a hub.”

Facebook’s growth curve is so strong that the recent privacy flaps seem not to have affected the numbers, but that can be deceptive. The biggest threat to Facebook is what Augie Ray, senior analyst at Forrester Research, calls “death by a thousand privacy cuts.” Messages about how Facebook has turned on its users and betrayed their trust are flooding the feed, and a new application called PrivacyDefender, a tool that automatically configures your Facebook privacy settings, is doing brisk business. The accumulation of lawmaker concerns, high-profile deleters, organizations raising consumer awareness, and security bugs (such as those found in Yelp) can create growing and important problems for Facebook.

Facebook is working on plans for its one billionth user celebration, projected to take place before the end of 2011. What better way to celebrate than for Facebook to announce a new philosophy for its relationship with its users: one of real partnership and respect. A plan could follow that specified how users will participate financially from the use of their data. Share personal information? No problem. Opt in? No problem. Facebook will be doing things differently, and it will get very different results.

Allan Hunt Badiner is a writer, activist and editor of three books: '*Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology*,' '*Zig Zag Zen: Buddhism and Psychedelics*' and '*Mindfulness in the Marketplace: Compassionate Responses to Consumerism*.'

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Joe Costello: The New Aristocrats of Finance Pose a Serious Threat to Our Democratic Way of Life

The New Aristocrats of Finance Pose a Serious Threat to Our Democratic Way of Life

By Joe Costello [article link](#)

August 8, 2010 | Archein | AlterNet

Let's face it, what a America needs is good clean fight. A fight that brings in everyone, redefines categories and alliances, cleanses our putrid politics, and establishes a healthy politics for the 21st century. At this point, there's just no way around it. Our politics is so defiled, our economy so completely in the clutches of a rabidly greedy few, and our government wallows in incompetence to the point of criminality, that the only cure is for the American people in unison to stand up, take responsibility, and claim what is rightfully ours. History shows this is never done without a fight.

I've always hated the term "American exceptionalism", more for how it was defined, than the concept itself. In the last decades, American exceptionalism has too often been defined as industrial capitalism, ribald consumerism, and militarism. But if we've learned anything in the last decades, these traits were easily transferred across the globe. However, what was not so easily transferred, and what historically is truly exceptional is this republic. In recorded history, the existence of republics, of self-government, has been the exception, and this republic with all its faults has indeed been exceptional. Here the masses of Europe, who for millenia tore each other apart, united under the banner of universal equality, intermixed, intermarried, and thrived. Over the centuries, fitfully and in small steps, and with still a ways to go, people from every other part of the world have slowly in some cases, and more rapidly in other, been brought into the mix.

In the last decades, under a confused, and too often misguided segregation into political individualism, call it identity politics, we have lost the more encompassing definition of what it is to be an American. Most importantly, and to our great detriment, in this quest for hyper-individual identity, we have lost our egalitarian ethic, that uniting and necessary glue in what can sometimes be the babble of republicanism. In the great declaration that announced the birth of this republic, before its proclamation of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", before "unalienable rights", comes the foundation for this democracy, for all democracy, the principle that "all men are created equal". And it is whenever aspiring to this principle, and often as not falling short, that America has turned to our better selves, when we are indeed exceptional.

Today, one can say for the first time in this republic's existence, the egalitarian ethic, the very foundation of this republic is itself endangered. You could have a very long discourse listing reasons on why this is, but I'll use one example. We are at the point of institutionalizing a financial aristocracy in this country and make no mistake, that will be the end of this republic. Yves Smith has a [nice piece](#) on one aspect of institutionalizing aristocracy in this country, their pathetic attempt at founding a sense of [noblesse oblige](#), which has always been one of history's great inside jokes. Across times, all aristocracies have been predatory, parasitic, and ruthless. Yet any aristocracy, if it is too last long, must develop a sense of noblesse oblige. You can only bleed the little people so much, without "noble" limits, the vast bottom will collapse or rebel. A sense of noblesse oblige has always been missing from the United States for it was born destructing aristocracy in all its forms, being against aristocracy has always been an American unifying element. It is an illusion that America's neo-aristocracy seems more greedy and glutenous than others through history. This illusion exists only because there is no facade of institutionalized noblesse oblige, simply because noblesse oblige is antithetical to the republican ethic of egalitarianism. An egalitarian ethic is defined by equal opportunity, fairness, and an understanding of general welfare. In

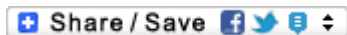
operation, it depends on the republican mechanisms of checks and balances for all manifestations of power be they political, economic, or cultural.

Across our democratic system, we have lost checks and balances. We have watched the burgeoning of an obscene aristocracy. The foundational check and balance for any republican system is the citizenry itself, and whether voluntarily or through coercion, this check and balance has badly deteriorated. It is time for us to unite as citizens, and uniting against aristocracy is essentially American, nor matter what our backgrounds or situation. We must redefine not that what makes us individuals, but that which makes us citizens of this republic. It is time to stand up to this nascent aristocracy and reclaim our power. Make no mistake, this will not be done without a fight, so ladies and gentlemen, let's have at it. It is your right, more importantly, it is your responsibility.

Read more of **Joe Costello's** work at [Archein](#). He's been involved in communications, energy and political economy for three decades. He was communications director for Jerry Brown's innovative 1992 presidential campaign and was a senior adviser for Howard Dean's effort in 2004. He's spent two decades thinking and acting on the confluence of information technologies and democratic political economy. He has written extensively on politics, finance and energy.

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Jeffrey Rudolph: Can You Pass The Terrorism Quiz?

Can You Pass The Terrorism Quiz?

By Jeffrey Rudolph [article link](#)

August 08, 2010 | CounterCurrents

Misconceptions about terrorism, regularly promoted by the mainstream media, have facilitated harmful US government actions—two wars, domestic legislation that curtailed civil liberties, excessive national security spending. That basic, factual information about terrorism is so rarely reported thus serves to reinforce the power of those who benefit from a fearful population.

It should be banal to read in the mainstream media that the US not only engages in terrorism but often aggravates it; that if the current crop of terrorists in, say, the Middle East were killed, new terrorists would simply arise if the underlying political and social conditions remained unchanged; and, that if a particular country is perceived as actively supporting dysfunctional political and social conditions in a part of the world, it will become the target of anger and, possibly, violence. Yet, instead of such obvious conclusions about terrorism, we are daily exposed to much bias and distortion.

Several years ago my local newspaper, the (very mainstream) Montreal Gazette, published a piece I had written with only one change: Jewish “terrorists” was edited as Jewish “fighters”—needless to say, “Arab terrorists” remained unchanged. To counter such inadequate journalism, I have prepared the following quiz.

The Terrorism Quiz :

1. Who made the following statement? “To watch the courageous Afghan freedom fighters battle modern arsenals with simple hand-held weapons is an inspiration to those who love freedom.”

-Ronald Reagan: President of the United States, 1981-1989. Click [here](#) for speech.

-[Photo](#) of President Reagan meeting with the Mujahideen:

-“In August 1998...President [Clinton] ordered missile strikes...to kill [freedom-loving] Osama bin Laden and his men in the camps in Afghanistan.” And, later, after 9/11, the US ... ([article link](#))

-The Afghan freedom fighters “had been encouraged and funded by America to join in the anticommunist Afghan campaign. ... The problem was that the genie of jihad would not go back in the bottle.” (Fawaz A. Gerges; Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy; Harcourt; New York: 2006; p. 114)

2. Which official report stated the following? “ the Iraq War has become the ‘cause celebre’ for jihadists...and is shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives.”

-The US government's National Intelligence Estimate on “Trends in Global Terrorism: implications for the United States.” (Mother Jones [article link](#))

-According to a study by terrorism experts, Peter Bergen and Paul Cruickshank, “ the Iraq War has generated a stunning sevenfold increase in the yearly rate of fatal jihadist attacks, amounting to literally hundreds of additional terrorist attacks and thousands of civilian lives lost...” (STWR [article link](#))

-To counter the threat of terrorism, the US should not invade other countries but coordinate its intelligence and police action with other states.

3. Approximately how many North Vietnamese civilians were killed by the US's three-and-a-half years Operation Rolling Thunder bombing campaign?

-According to U.S. estimates, 182,000 North Vietnamese civilians were killed. (PBS [article link](#))

-“Late in Gillo Pontecorvo's...film, The Battle of Algiers, ... a scene occurs in which Ben H'midi, the captured political leader of the FLN, is asked by a French journalist how he could justify murdering innocent French civilians. In a reference to the French use of napalm and carpet-bombing in the countryside, H'midi replies: ‘Let us have your bombers and you can have our women's baskets.’ In other words, atrocities are atrocities. And if the oppressed appear to use more ‘primitive’ means, it is because they are forced onto unequal ground.” (Jonathan Barker; The No-Nonsense Guide to Global Terrorism; Between the Lines; Toronto: 2008; p. 80)

4. True or False: Studies have repeatedly found that the bulk of terrorists are normal.

-True. Many people may believe “that since what terrorists do is not ‘normal’...there must be something about the terrorist too that is ‘abnormal’”. Yet, according to interviews, very few terrorists were pathological or otherwise insane. “In fact, given the difficulties involved in planning and pulling off the kind of spectacular terrorist operations that al-Qa’ida favors, it often requires people who are intelligent... at least for the leaders of any operation.” (Kenneth M. Pollack; A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East; Random House; New York: 2008; pp. 173 and 175)

-“[E]xperts seem to agree... that suicide bombers are normal individuals; they are not ‘crazy’ or born with a psychopathology that predisposes them to violent activism.” (Mohammed M. Hafez; Suicide Bombers In Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom; United States Institute of Peace Press; Washington D.C.: 2007; p. 8)

-“The fact that most terrorists are not psychotic, sociopathic, or otherwise psychologically damaged suggests the importance of environmental factors in their decision to join a terrorist organization.” (Kenneth M. Pollack; A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East; Random House; New York: 2008; p. 175)

5. How many suicide bombings had Iraq experienced before the 2003 US invasion?

-None. “[I]raq... never experienced suicide terrorism before 2003 [yet after the invasion Iraq]... has produced the largest arsenal of ‘martyrs’ ever seen...” (Mohammed M. Hafez; Suicide Bombers In Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom; United States Institute of Peace Press; Washington D.C.: 2007; p. 5)

-Iraq's experience provides additional evidence of the possible relationship between occupation by a democratic country and suicide bombings. Other examples are Lebanon, Kashmir and Sri Lanka. ([article link](#))

6. In 1958, according to the United States National Security Council, what was the main reason the Arab people hated the US?

-“In a staff discussion... president Dwight Eisenhower described ‘the campaign of hatred against us (in the Arab world), not by the governments but by the people’. His National Security Council outlined the basic argument: the US supports corrupt and oppressive governments and is ‘opposing political or economic progress’ because of its interest in controlling the oil resources of the region. Post-September 11 [2001] surveys in the Arab world reveal that the same reasons hold today, compounded with resentment over specific policies [such as the US’s]...crucial support for Israel’s harsh military occupation...” ([article link](#))

-It seems that the main reason for Muslim Middle Easterners hatred is the perception “that we [the US] support the autocratic regimes that they (rightly) hold responsible for their misery. ... Thus the anger and despair they feel because of the actions (and inaction) of their own governments get transferred to the United States in the belief that we are the ultimate power behind the local autocrats.” (Kenneth M. Pollack; A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East; Random House; New York: 2008; p. 199)

7. Who stated the following to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in 2005? “Our [the US’s] policies in the Middle East fuel Islamic resentment.”

-Lowell E. Jacoby: U.S. Vice Admiral, then director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. (Fawaz A. Gerges; Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy; Harcourt; New York: 2006; p. 267)

8. Who said the following? "Arab anger over the Palestinian question limits the strength and depth of U.S. partnerships with governments and peoples [in the Middle East]."

-David Petraeus: US Army general. ([article link](#))

9. True or False: Revenge is an important cause of terrorism.

-True. For example, “The University of Toronto sociologist Robert Brym carefully studied all 138 suicide bombings between September 2000 and mid-July 2005. He concluded that in the vast majority of cases the suicide bombers themselves—whatever their ideological predispositions, or the groups that claimed responsibility—had lost a friend or close relative to Israeli fire. They acted, he wrote, ‘out of revenge.’” (Bernard Avishai; The Hebrew Republic; Harcourt; New York: 2008; p. 255.)

-“ A new study by America’s National Bureau for Economic Research looking at the circumstances around 4,000 civilian deaths in Afghanistan found a high correlation between NATO killing of even two civilians in an area and a spike of attacks on NATO and US troops. ... A heavy footprint and more NATO operations likely will create the monster Washington fears, a growing insurgency, rather than ‘blunting the momentum’ of the ‘Taliban’...” ([article link](#))

10. What was the main objective of al-Qaeda for the 9/11 attacks?

-“[B]in Laden, Zawahiri, and company [in the late 1990s] were pursuing bigger ambitions [than other jihadists]—waking the Muslim community from its slumber. ... In a secret 1998 letter to another militant—recovered in 2001 from captured Al Qaeda computers in Kabul—Zawahiri points out that Al Qaeda had escalated the fight against ‘the biggest of the criminals, the Americans’ to drag them for an open battle with the nation’s masses[...].” Bin Laden and Zawahiri “expected a Muslim response similar to that following the Russian invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. Their goal was to generate a major world crisis, provoking the United States...; American attacks on Muslim countries would reinvigorate and unify a splintered, war-torn jihadist movement and restore its credibility in the eyes of [Muslims]... When the United States invaded Afghanistan, however, Al Qaeda found itself on its own. ... No religious authority lent his name and legitimacy to

repelling the American troops. ... Most jihadists were opposed to what bin Laden had done, some even within his own wing of the movement.” “[S]heikh Mohammed Sayyed Tantawi, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in Cairo, the oldest religious institution in the Islamic world, swiftly dismissed bin Laden's jihad credentials as ‘fraudulent’ and warned young Muslims against... Al Qaeda's call to fight in Afghanistan.” “In contrast to the war in Afghanistan, the 2003 U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Iraq triggered a torrent of angry responses by Islamists, ulemas, secular Muslims, and religious Muslims alike. ... Institutions and clerics urged Muslims to join in jihad with their Iraqi brethren and repel the American invaders. (Fawaz A. Gerges; *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy*; Harcourt; New York: 2006; p. 181, 203-4, 209-10, 240-1)

-Group (i.e., non-state) terrorism is done for various reasons including to sabotage a peace process; to exact revenge; to attract attention and resources to an issue; and, to try and induce an entity to overreact in order to augment support for the group.

11. True or False: Over 20% of the respondents of a 2005 Gallup poll of ten predominantly Muslim countries felt the 9/11 attacks were fully justified.

-False. Only 7% felt the 9/11 attacks were fully justified; moreover this 7% was no more or less religious than the other 93%. (Kenneth M. Pollack; *A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East*; Random House; New York: 2008; p. 209)

-Even “The Hizbollah leadership distanced itself from September 11 and went public in its criticism of Al Qaeda.” (Fawaz A. Gerges; *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy*; Harcourt; New York: 2006; p. 189)

12. True or False: Of the seventy-nine worst al-Qa’ida and other Salafi terrorists, more had attended madrasas than regular universities.

-False. 54% attended regular universities and 11% attended madrasas. Indeed, of those who had attended secular institutions, 48% had gone to Western schools. (Kenneth M. Pollack; *A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East*; Random House; New York: 2008; p. 210.)

13. True or False: The majority of terrorists come from the lower-classes.

-False. “[N]umerous academic and government studies find that terrorists tend to be drawn from well-educated, middle-class or high-income families. Among those who have...studied the issue, there is not much question that poverty has little to do with terrorism. ... Most terrorists are not so desperately poor that they have nothing to live for. Instead they are people who care so deeply...about a cause that they are willing to die for it.” (Alan B. Krueger; *What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism*; Princeton University Press; New Jersey: 2007; pp. 3-4.)

-Throughout history “The leaders of revolutionary movements and their offshoot terrorist groups are almost invariably scions of the middle class, with exceptions from the upper class being at least as prevalent as those from the lower classes.” (Kenneth M. Pollack; *A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East*; Random House; New York: 2008; p. 178.)

-Terrorists are disproportionately from the middle-class because members of this class suffer most from betrayed expectations. “The unfulfilled expectations of the middle class derived from the [Middle East] region's economic problems, coupled with (and in part caused by) crippling political practices, is almost certainly a powerful element driving many members of the Arab and Iranian middle classes to opposition and, at the extreme, membership in terrorist organizations.” “[E]conomic factors like poverty or unemployment typically produce revolutionary and/or terrorist responses only when they are coupled with oppressive political forces that deny the individual any hope of bettering his (or her) situation but also serve as a tangible focus of anger.” (Kenneth M. Pollack; *A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East*; Random House; New York: 2008; pp.180 and 186)

14. Which groups committed the following terrorist acts in Palestine to further nationalist goals?

- i) July 22, 1946: Terrorists blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem killing or injuring more than 200 persons.
 - ii) December 19, 1947: Terrorists attacked a village near Safad, blowing up two houses, in the ruins of which were found the bodies of 10 persons, including 5 children.
 - iii) December 30, 1947: Terrorists attacked the village of Balad al Sheikh, killing more than 60 persons.
 - iv) March 3, 1948: Terrorists drove an army truck up to a building in Haifa and detonated 400 pounds of explosives that killed 14 persons and injured 23.
- i) The Irgun: Zionist paramilitary group led by future prime minister Menachem Begin. It was classified as a terrorist organization by Israel itself when it became a state in 1948. ([article link](#))
- ii) The Haganah: Jewish paramilitary organization which became the core of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Members of the Haganah included future prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Ariel Sharon.
- iii) The Palmach: Elite fighting force of the Haganah. (The Palmach's last operation as an independent unit was against the Irgun. Perhaps right-wing Jews should not be so smug when they hear of fighting between Fatah and Hamas.)
- iv) The Stern Gang: Radical Zionist paramilitary group that split from the Irgun in 1940. Future Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir was among its leaders.

-“[T]errorism arises when there are few effective alternative means for an extremist group to pursue its aims. If a movement is strong enough to mount a full-fledged civil war, it will wage a full-fledged civil war. I think terrorism tends to arise in situations in which the odds are against the group that is perpetrating the terrorist acts. The tension between Israel and the Palestinians is an example. Israel dominates militarily. A full-fledged war was never a possibility. Historically there were some cases in which terrorism did achieve the goals of an organization, or at least brought the organization closer to achieving its goals. You could probably say that about the formation of the state of Israel.” (Alan B. Krueger; What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism; Princeton University Press; New Jersey: 2007; p. 154)

15. If a terrorist act can be linked to a country or group should that preclude diplomacy with that country or group?

- No. Otherwise North Vietnam and the US—two perpetrators of terror—could not have negotiated in the 1960s/70s, ditto for Egypt and Israel, The US and the USSR, Britain and the IRA, South Africa and the ANC, etc.
- Only actions are unambiguously terrorist or non-terrorist. People and organizations make more or less use of terrorism often in conjunction with other kinds of political action. Terrorism, much of it state terrorism, has been integral to warfare between government and guerillas, just as it has been part of state-on-state warfare.

16. True or False: The internationally respected Goldstone Report accused Israel of terrorizing Gaza's civilians during the December 2008 Gaza invasion.

-True. Although Israel justified the Gaza invasion as self-defense against Hamas rockets, the Goldstone Report concluded that the attack was “a deliberately disproportionate attack designed to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population, radically diminish its local economic capacity both to work and to provide for itself, and to force upon it an ever increasing sense of dependency and vulnerability.” (Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (25 September 2009).)

17. True or False: The religion of Islam is an important cause of terrorism.

-False. Most Arab terrorists “espouse religious zealotry (although many do not actually practice it), but it is their anger and desperation, derived from their circumstances, that drives them to religion and so to the militant groups, not the other way around. Indeed, the slums...of the Arab world are almost uniformly hotbeds of Islamism and provide a seemingly endless supply of new recruits (mostly foot soldiers, but a few leaders) for the Salafi terrorists.” (Kenneth M. Pollack; A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East; Random House; New York: 2008; p. 183)

-“Given that notions of jihad and martyrdom are contested concepts subject to competing interpretations...[i]s the charisma of fanatical leaders sufficient to convince young people to make the ultimate sacrifice, or must there be additional factors such as societal conflicts or cultural facilitators that push individuals to give up their lives?...[T]he causal link between religious inspiration and suicide attacks is not a direct one. One must situate these appeals in broader societal conflicts that allow radical ideologies to resonate with the wider public.” (Mohammed M. Hafez; Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers; United States Institute of Peace Press; Washington D.C.: 2006; p. 10)

-Rather than Islam in particular, it seems that religion in general is what aggravates volatile situations. For example, “Christian fundamentalism is partially to blame for fueling Muslim militancy. Lebanon's Christians killed and pillaged in the name of the cross...Religious coexistence gave way to estrangement [in the 1970s]...Waving holy banners, neighbor railed against neighbor. People seized upon their communal identity in a desperate effort at self-preservation. The state of war pushed people into their sectarian bunkers and turned an open, tolerant society into a jungle. ... Christian fundamentalism, which was xenophobic and supremacist, fed into parallel tendencies in the Muslim camp. More than a hundred thousand people perished in the Lebanese Civil War. A million people—a third of the country's population—were displaced.” (Fawaz A. Gerges; Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy; Harcourt; New York: 2006; p. 82-83)

18. Which Middle Eastern country suffered an 18 October 2009 Baluchi terrorist attack that killed dozens and that was condemned by the US?

-Iran. ““We condemn this act of terrorism and mourn the loss of innocent lives,' said Ian C. Kelly, a State Department spokesman.” ([article link](#))

-Iran also suffers terrorist attacks from Salafis.

-It should be noted that there is not a single known instance of an Iranian suicide-bomber since the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988. (Robert Baer; The Devil We Know: Dealing with the New Iranian Superpower; Crown Publishers; New York: 2008) For more details on Iran see “Can You Pass the Iran Quiz”.

19. What are the Annual Risks for an American to die from: Heart disease? Criminal homicide? Lightning strike? Terrorism?

-Heart disease: 1 in 300 people in America typically die of heart disease in a given year; Criminal homicide: 1 in 18,000; Lightning strike: 1 in 3,000,000; Terrorism: 1 in 5,293,000. (Alan B. Krueger; What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism; Princeton University Press; New Jersey: 2007; p. 139)

-Perhaps if Americans better understood the risk they face from terrorism they would fear it less and thus be less susceptible to manipulation.

20. Has Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad ever deliberately attacked American targets?

-No. However, the PLO, currently the US's favored Palestinian group, did deliberately attack US targets in the past. The “last attacks that can be tied to elements of the PLO coalition are the 1985 Achille Lauro hijacking by the Palestine Liberation Front and the 1986 hijacking of an American airliner by the Abu Nidal Organization.” (Kenneth M. Pollack; A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East; Random House; New York: 2008; p. 170.)

-Unlike the revolutionary al-Qaida, Hamas is looking to achieve concrete results for occupied and oppressed Palestinians.

-“Central to the IRA's decision to decommission its weapons was Sinn Fein's inclusion in the political process. ... As Hamas enters and achieves representation within the political process, can this induce it to curtail its campaign of suicide terrorism, as the IRA's inclusion led to a curtailment of its campaign of terror? [Yet, Israel, the US and other states immediately imposed sanctions on Hamas following its 2006 election victory.]” (Mohammed M. Hafez; Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers; United States Institute of Peace Press; Washington D.C.: 2006; p. xii)

-For more information on Hamas see, “Can You Pass The Hamas Quiz?” (link below -MMr)

21. True or False: A majority of the people in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates support al-Qa'ida's goal of creating an Islamic state.

-False. “[T]he vast majority of Arabs and Muslims ardently desire the kind of political pluralism (even democracy...) that bin Ladin and his ilk have declared antithetical to Islam—at least their version of Islam.” (Kenneth M. Pollack; A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East; Random House; New York: 2008; p. 209)

22. True or False: In 1997 a declassified CIA training manual detailed torture methods used against suspected subversives in Central America during the 1980s.

-True. The CIA manual refuted claims by the agency that no such methods were taught by it. The CIA also declassified a Vietnam-era training manual which also taught torture. (Jonathan Barker; The No-Nonsense Guide to Global Terrorism; Between the Lines; Toronto: 2008; p. 85)

Jeffrey Rudolph, a college professor, was the Quebec representative of the East Timor Alert Network, and presented a paper on its behalf at the United Nations. He prepared the widely-distributed “[Can You Pass the Israel-Palestine Quiz](#),” “[Can You Pass the Iran Quiz](#),” and “[Can You Pass the Hamas Quiz](#).” Comments or questions concerning the quizzes should be emailed to: Israel-Palestine-Quiz@live.com

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Sunday, August 8, 2010

[Timothy V. Gatto: Are We Crazy?](#)

Are We Crazy?

by Timothy V. Gatto [article link](#) [article link](#)

August 07, 2010 | LiberalPro | OpEdNews

I have a friend who is a conservative. He watches FOX News and is a very old school type of fellow. He really doesn't understand me politically, believing that because I despise FOX and the rabid right, that I must be a Democrat. Since he is staying at my house for the week, we are together most of our waking hours and as hard as we try, the subject of politics always rears its ugly head.

I believe that I have finally convinced him that I am no Democrat and hold the Democrats in the same light as I hold the Republicans. My friend likens the two political parties like this; The Republicans come right out and tell you they are going to screw you, but the Democrats act all warm and fuzzy and tell you that they are your friends and end up screwing you worse than the Republicans. Maybe he's right, maybe not. However, there is some grain of truth in what he says. Obama is a perfect example of his Democratic vision. This is a man that promised great changes and gave us nothing.

War seems to be this country's greatest export. The only export that we sell above all other nations is in arms, we are the world's largest purveyors of instruments of death. We spend over half of our discretionary spending on our military. This year, after all of the supplemental funding for the war in Afghanistan, this nation will have spent over a trillion dollars.

When I ask my friend why we spend ourselves into debt at the height of a recession that put more Americans out of work since the Great Depression, I get the answer that if we leave Afghanistan, al Qaeda will walk into the country and use it as a base to launch terrorist attacks. WTF? Why does al Qaeda expressly need Afghanistan to launch attacks on the United States? Couldn't they do their planning in Belgium or Luxembourg? How about Pakistan? From the information gleaned from Wikileaks, it seems like the leaders of the security forces there would be only too happy to help them launch an attack on the U.S.

Left is right and right is left. We want war with Iran, another country in "The Axis of Evil". Why Iran? What is it that threatens us? Are we just slaves to Israel, a country that over the years has turned into a nation that resembles WWII Germany more that it reflects the beliefs of most Americans? Most of our politicians are millionaires and if they are not, by the time they leave they usually are.

Why are we threatening Latin America? What have they done to us? If they want socialism, so what, it seems that capitalism hasn't worked out very well for them. Are we going to invade Venezuela? Why? What have they done to us?

This threatening of nations in Latin America is all done for the corporate interests that REALLY run our government. Know that and you can see clearly why we do the things we do. "Government of the People"? That ended a long time ago. We are a government ruled by multi-national corporations that could care less about the American people. It's really time to wake up and smell the corruption.

Timothy V. Gatto: Former Chairman of the Liberal Party of America, Tim is a retired Army Sergeant. He currently lives in South Carolina. A regular contributor to OpEdNews, he is the author of *Kimchee Days* or *Stoned Cold Warriors* and is currently at work on a new novel. Tim's political book, *"From Complicity to Contempt"* and *"Kimchee Days"* can be purchased at most online booksellers. The second book in the political series called *"Contempt to Outrage"* is due to come out in September, 2010.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:28 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Paul Craig Roberts: "Let Them Eat Cake"

"Let Them Eat Cake": A handful of oligarchs are becoming billionaires while the rest of the country goes down the drain

by Paul Craig Roberts [article link](#)

July 31, 2010 | Global Research

It is not unusual for members of the diminishing upper middle class to drop \$20,000 or \$30,000 on a big wedding. But for celebrities this large sum wouldn't cover the wedding dress or the flowers.

When country music star Keith Urban married actress Nicole Kidman in 2006, their wedding cost \$250,000. This large sum hardly counts as a celebrity wedding. When mega-millionaire real estate mogul Donald Trump married model Melania Knauss, the wedding bill was \$1,000,000.

The marriages of Madonna and film director Guy Ritchie, Tiger Woods and Elin Nordegren, and Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones pushed up the cost of celebrity marriages to \$1.5 million.

Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes upped the ante to \$2,000,000.

Now comes the politicians's daughter as celebrity. According to news reports, Chelsea Clinton's wedding to investment banker Mark Mezvinsky on July 31 is costing papa Bill \$3,000,000. According to the London Daily Mail, the total price tag will be about \$5,000,000. The additional \$2,000,000 apparently is being laid off on US Taxpayers as Secret Service costs for protecting former president Clinton and foreign heads of state, such as the presidents of France and Italy and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who are among the 500 invited guests along with Barbara Streisand, Steven Spielberg, Oprah Winfrey, Ted Turner, and Clinton friend and donor Denise Rich, wife of the Clinton-pardoned felon.

Before we attend to the poor political judgment of such an extravagant affair during times of economic distress, let us wonder aloud where a poor boy who became governor of Arkansas and president of the United States got such a fortune that he can blow \$3,000,000 on a wedding.

The American people did not take up a collection to reward him for his service to them.

Where did the money come from? Who was he really serving during his eight years in office?

How did Tony Blair and his wife, Cherrie, end up with an annual income of ten million pounds (approximately \$15 million dollars) as soon as he left office?

Who was Blair really serving?

These are not polite questions, and they are infrequently asked.

While Chelsea's wedding guests eat a \$11,000 wedding cake and admire \$250,000 floral displays, Lisa Roberts in Ohio is struggling to raise contributions for her food pantry in order to feed 3,000 local people, whose financial independence was destroyed by investment bankers, job offshoring, and unaffordable wars. The Americans dependent on Lisa Roberts' food pantry are living out of vans and cars. Those with a house roof still over their heads are packed in as many as 14 per household according to the Chillicothe Gazette in Ohio.

The Chilicothe Gazette reports that Lisa Roberts' food pantry has "had to cut back to half rations per person in order to have something for everyone who needed it."

Theresa DePugh stepped up to the challenge and had the starving Ohioans write messages on their food pantry paper plates to President Obama, who has just obtained another \$33 billion to squander on a pointless war in Afghanistan that serves no purpose whatsoever except the enrichment of the military/security complex and its shareholders.

The Guardian (UK) reports that according to US government reports, one million American children go to bed hungry, while the Obama regime squanders hundreds of billions of dollars killing women and children in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The Guardian's reporting relies on a US government report from the US Department of Agriculture, which concludes that 50 million people in the US--one in six of the population--were unable to afford to buy sufficient food to stay healthy in 2008.

US Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said that he expected the number of hungry Americans to worsen when the survey for 2010 is released.

Today in the American Superpower, one of every six Americans is living on food stamps.

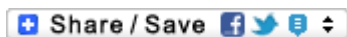
The Great American Superpower, which is wasting trillions of dollars in pursuit of world hegemony, has 22% of its population unemployed and almost 17% of its population dependent on welfare in order to stay alive.

The world has not witnessed such total failure of government since the final days of the Roman Empire. A handful of American oligarchs are becoming mega-billionaires while the rest of the country goes down the drain.

And the American sheeple remain acquiescent.

Paul Craig Roberts is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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Mammon or Messiah research

Sunday, August 8, 2010

David Michael Green: What Is To Be Done(?)

What Is To Be Done(?)

by David Michael Green [article link](#)

August 8, 2010 | CommonDreams

I often receive email from readers which goes something along these lines: "Thank you for your article identifying the problems with American politics and government. But what are the solutions?"

I am flattered that anyone would expect me to be able to solve that mystery, while being simultaneously chagrined that I don't think I have very much in the way of good answers. In part that may be because I'm not smart or creative enough to solve that problem, anymore than I'm equipped to cure cancer or discover a unified field theory of physics. But in part it is also because the problem itself (like curing cancer or theorizing physics) is very difficult. The evidence for that is that no other progressive that I'm aware of is offering a serious solution. It's not like we on the left are spending our time these days debating the merits of multiple proposals on the table. Or even one...

Consider the magnitude of the problem, to start with. American society and government is, it seems to me, in the worst shape its been in since at least 1932. Unparalleled and unmitigated greed of astonishing proportions has turned the federal government into a feeding trough for special interests, on an epic scale. This has produced what is essentially an economic war on non-elites for the last three decades, which has succeeded in dramatically redistributing wealth upward, so that the US now resembles any good banana republic or feudal society in this regard. More or less all policy decisions during this era have been oriented toward that one goal, certainly including those concerning taxes, subsidies, trade and labor relations, not to mention our uncontrolled military spending and wars. Even so-called welfare state program expansions like Bush's prescription drug plan or Obama's health care initiative are really massive feedback redistributions of public wealth to corporate actors, dressed up with enough trinkets for the hoi polloi so as to appear that their purpose is to improve the health of real Americans.

Moreover, all the traditional bulwarks against this natural tendency for power and wealth concentration to occur have been effectively neutralized, starting with the hijacking of the Democratic Party. Bill Clinton is one of the worst criminals of our time (and yet many stupid, gaga, celebrity-inebriated Democrats still worship him), in many respects far more guilty of far greater sins than Reagan or Wee Bush. We expect Republicans to lie and to represent the interests of Wall Street and the Chamber of Commerce. Clinton, on the other hand, bears more responsibility than anyone for turning the Democratic Party into a more smiley version of just the same thing. Obama is following suit. He is as corporate as it gets. You'll find his constituents in mansions and boardrooms, not in two-bedroom houses across middle America.

The upshot is that there is no political party in Washington anymore advocating for the needs and interests of real working people. That was not always the case. From the 1930s through the 1970s, the Democratic Party was a (very imperfect) vehicle for the representation of hundreds of millions of ordinary Americans, and the (very imperfect) policies they put through reflected that. Even Republicans largely went along for the ride back in those days, never seriously seeking to dismantle such programs or radically reorient such policies.

The same might be said of the media and other institutions of or related to American governance, such as the courts and universities and even corporate America, in those days a far less pernicious actor than today. The long and short of it is that the political mountain to climb today seems so much larger than in the past. Anyone paying attention to what is happening should have a strong sense of the walls closing in around us, faster and faster. The downsizing of the American middle class may be happening with greater rapidity these last two years, as jobs become scarce and employees are forced to work

longer and get paid less, but it is only an acceleration of a process that has been going on full bore for three decades now. And there is no one in Washington today to hear your screams of agony. Why would they? They're the ones who have been doing the torturing.

Similarly, the road ahead is difficult because the tactics of resistance employed with mixed success in the past seem almost completely spent today. Does your congresswoman remotely notice when you send a letter about an issue you care about? Yeah, if you're BP or Goldman Sachs. Otherwise, you're about as likely to get their attention as either of those outfits are to be responsible for the damage they've done. How about a march on Washington? Does anyone even notice those anymore? In the 1950s and 1960s they were relatively fresh and drew attention accordingly. Today, you can have the biggest worldwide collection of protest rallies ever, and it will not change a thing. We know that because that is exactly what happened in the run up to the Iraq invasion of 2003. I could be wrong about this, but something tells me that George W. Bush wasn't paying a lot of attention to our raised voices back then. Heck, people don't even notice anymore when gunmen shoot up their workplace and then kill themselves, something that happens with alarming regularity. Why would they notice yet another protest march, especially when they're worrying about keeping a roof over their heads?

The sad truth is, it seems to me, that breaking through the wall of indifference today requires either a volume we aren't organized enough to generate, a desperation we haven't gotten to yet, or a creativity that largely eludes us.

But, maybe focusing on tactics is part of the problem. Tactics should ideally serve strategy, strategy should in turn serve objectives, objectives should be a product of problem analysis, and analysis should be rooted in theory. It seems to me that we progressives are decent when it comes to identifying objectives - though even here there will certainly be disagreement - but not much else. We can probably agree on such policy propositions as living wage requirements, regulating corporations in the public interest, ending wars or addressing global warming. But discovering the strategy or tactics to make those things happen eludes us, as does perhaps a theory of the deeper nature of our condition.

I don't have answers to these questions or solutions to fill in these blanks. But perhaps I can advance the conversation a bit by suggesting that we ought to think first about the nature of the situation we face, certainly before we begin trying to identify problems, or specifying strategies and tactics to address those.

It seems to me that there are three major possibilities here, each with its own implications about how to proceed toward fixing the country and what ails us. Each successive possibility implies a greater depth of despair with respect to the condition we're in, and therefore a more radical solution necessary to address that situation. But, that said, none are easy fixes.

The first analysis of our national malaise, the one invoking the least pervasive depth of the problem, goes to the question of policy. Here, one could argue that we simply have lousy policymakers making lousy policies. The obvious solution, therefore, is to replace them. Equally obvious, meanwhile, is that the Republican Party is completely hopeless. A best case scenario is that they will continue to represent the aspirations of plutocrats and frightened, stupid, racist, homophobic, ancient middle and working class crackers of the Bible Belt, until that lovely generation becomes irrelevant and disappears. We know that parties can change, especially since the GOP began life as an abolitionist vehicle for the likes of Abraham Lincoln. But we also know that parties can die, as did the Whigs. In the case of the Republicans, the latter is a more likely and probably better outcome.

That leaves basically two choices going forward. One would be to launch a viable third party that stood for progressive principles. As noted, third parties do come to power in the United States, so this is clearly not impossible. But the last time it happened was 150 years ago, so it is just as clearly not probable. All the institutional arrangements in American government and politics - most especially our district (often erroneously described as the "first past the post" model) electoral system - are conveniently arrayed to prevent any third party from arising. I've seen (and participated in) numerous attempts in my lifetime to go down this path, including the current Green Party. None have come remotely close to cracking open the system. As evidence of that, consider this: of the 535 people who are now (and, I'm pretty sure, throughout my lifetime) members of Congress, not a single one comes from a third party. Not even one. And not for want of trying either. This record of astonishingly complete failure is a product of a system designed (quite effectively, we must acknowledge) to shut out real choice at all costs. And it works.

The other remaining remedy for this first analysis of what ails the country is to take over the Democratic Party. That's a long hard job, but I think it is one that is possible to accomplish. We've seen this happen constantly throughout history, with different cohorts and factions grabbing control of either party, typically by out-hustling their rivals, and with parties morphing in character over time. The Republican Eisenhower/Ford moderates who had owned the party in the post-war years lost control over the last generation or so to the Reagan/Bush corporate hacks masquerading as radical conservatives. The tea party movement is an effort to complete that movement. Pretty much the same thing has happened to the Democratic Party, where Clinton/Obama-style corporate hacks masquerading as New Democrat/Third Way moderates have taken over that party from the Kennedy/Johnson/Mondale-type old school liberals. In short, it can be done. If we think that the problem with America is simply that the wrong people are making the wrong policy choices, then this is, in my judgement, the best remedy to address that condition, and possibly the only one.

But what if the problem lies deeper? What if the reason that the wrong people are making the wrong policy decisions is rooted in the corruption of our institutional framework, which is set up to produce precisely those people and precisely those policy decisions? In short, what if the country's campaign finance system is the problem, designed quite purposively to insure that the special interests of the overclass are attended to, and the rest of us ignored or at best placated? What if, therefore, political parties become virtually irrelevant, because each one is as bought-off as the next?

There is, of course, massive evidence that this is precisely the case. In the old days, railroad and other robber-barons would simply drop a paper bag full of cash on a congressman's desk and instruct him on how he would be voting. Today, the process is slightly more subtle, but the effect is absolutely the same. Money completely rules American politics, and policy choices are made almost entirely to serve the plutocracy. Those folks invest thousands, in exchange for which they get back billions. Meanwhile, politicians get elected, and later, rich as well. Everybody wins. Except, er, the public, of course.

If this is what we judge to be the core problem, then the requisite solution takes the form of campaign finance reform. That is no easy mountain to climb, either, not least because there are quite real freedom of speech issues to be grappled with, along with the entirely bogus ones that would be instantly generated by the Scalia bloc (AKA the deeply regressive majority) of the US Supreme Court to utterly destroy any attempt by Congress at getting money out of politics. Oh, and best of luck getting the people who owe their jobs and perks and riches to the current system to change it in the first place. The solution here is pretty clear - publically financed campaigns - but it would probably necessitate a constitutional amendment to pull it off and make it stick. With the clout and moral authority Obama had in early 2009 he might have been able to do this if he had effectively used the bully pulpit to vociferously make his case to the public, moving them to demand that Congress act and the states ratify. It would have been enormously difficult, but the benefits would be gigantic. Of course, though, he didn't even raise the topic. And the opportunity to do this again is probably lost for another generation or more.

But what if the problem of American politics and governance runs even deeper still than the systemic corruption of a campaign finance system that purchases government on the cheap for the wealthiest among us? What if there is an oligarchy that (as James Douglass asserts, regarding JFK) will physically destroy anyone who remotely challenges its authority and its profits? What if any sort of replacement of officials or systemic fix would be entirely superficial and wholly irrelevant to the question of actual governance? What if Eisenhower's warning about the extremely dangerous influence of the military-industrial complex was as prescient as it was ignored?

Then, of course, we're into something much deeper altogether. And any sort of contemplated solution becomes a much heavier proposition, likely involving mass public action of some sort and a serious reconfiguration of the country's power structure and system of governance. That's probably a fancy way of saying 'revolution', though there are possibilities of serious change which imply less freighted repercussions than are typically associated with that term. Wholesale reform doesn't necessarily require guillotines or mob violence. Look at the 'velvet revolutions' of Eastern Europe as examples, among others. Another possibility would entail finding ways of splitting the governing class into factions and encouraging them to destroy one another in a civil war - a progressive divide and conquer strategy. Or a perhaps non-violent Gandhian civil disobedience approach for confronting power. There are other conceivable strategies as well, all of which involve wholesale - essentially revolutionary - change, addressing the key question of who governs.

So which of these three scenarios of escalating pathology is the correct one? How bad is it? And what, therefore, is required?

Many on the left opt for the third analysis, and are indeed contemptuous of anyone whose own assessment comes in anywhere short of that. I am partially sympathetic to that conclusion, but also somewhat dubious because of the simple empirical reality of American history. Conditions were horrid for most Americans prior to the 1930s, and women and gays and minorities were subjected to every form of assault. Then it got a lot better (and in some ways - gay rights, notably - even continues to do so now). A broad and robust middle class was even created where one had not existed before. The distribution of wealth was dramatically changed in a favorable way. Civil rights were pushed substantially forward. Civil liberties were expanded. Environmentalism was born in American politics and in the consciousness of the public. Attitudes changed, policies changed, and the lives of hundreds of millions of us were enormously improved.

These are all huge developments that would require utter fictionalized historical revisionism to deny (so, I say, let's not). And, they were the product of politics, leading to better policy. In the last thirty years, moreover, we've been watching a steady reversal of these gains on every front. Again, this is happening because of politics and resulting policy choices. The upshot is that it is hard for me, in the light of these plain historical facts, to see the political system immutable and fixed. To reach that conclusion, one would have to argue either that change never happened, or that it was once possible but no longer is. I don't reject the latter notion out of hand, but neither have I seen evidence for such an argument.

My own sense is that the system may be amenable to meaningful reform efforts short of something so dramatic as 1789. It also may not, but it strikes me as worth trying the lesser tumult to see if that works. Revolutions, among other untoward and unwanted consequences, tend to have an unhappy unpredictability to them. The one in Russia in 1917, for example, led pretty directly to Stalin. China's gave the country Mao, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, all in the name of serving the people. Not that you can exactly make revolutions happen on demand, anyhow.

In any case, any attempt to seriously divorce money and monied interests from governing choices will be a monumentally uphill battle in its own right, and one which will be fought fiercely. It would also have the unfortunate potential, as similar attempts have shown in recent decades, to simply rearrange the landscape without changing the country's essential power structure. As others have noted before, money in politics is like water rolling downhill. You may be able to block it one place, but it will try very hard to find another way down the mountain, and it will typically succeed.

But if I am asked what is my prescription for the reform of American politics, I guess this would be my starting point. Campaign finance reform seems, on the one hand, a mind-numbingly technocratic solution to a fundamentally moral problem, and on the other a wholly inadequate response to our current situation. It may be both.

Yet it may be the single key to solving ninety percent of our problems, and also, subsequently, to changing our attitudes and the fundamental relationship we have with our own system of governance. It is also, in its own way, a profoundly moral response to the sickness of our time. It calls for nothing short of public policymaking in the national interest, rather than to satisfy the bottomless greed of special interests.

It might, therefore, radically change this country for the better.

And though it also might not, it certainly seems to me a worthy starting point toward that end.

What is to be done? That is my final answer, Regis.

(For now.)

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Gary Dorrien: A Case For Economic Democracy

A Case For Economic Democracy

by Gary Dorrien [article link](#)

May/June 2009 | Tikkun Magazine

*This lecture was delivered on March 25, 2009, at Union Theological Seminary in a public forum, "Christianity and the U.S. Crisis," associated with a class co-taught by Cornel West, Serene Jones, and Gary Dorrien. It is an abridged version of a chapter in Dorrien's forthcoming book, *Social Justice in Question: Economy, Difference, Empire, and Progressive Christianity* (Columbia University Press, 2010).*

Today we are caught in a global economic crash and depression, a calamity affecting every nation connected to the global economy, especially poor nations lacking economic reserves. But this crisis also puts into play new possibilities for a democratic surge, perhaps toward economic democracy.

From the perspective of Economics 101, every bubble mania is basically alike, but from the beginning, this one has been harder to swallow, because it started with people who were just trying to buy a house of their own, who usually had no concept of predatory lending, and who had no say in the securitization boondoggle that spliced up various components of risk to trade them separately. It seemed a blessing to get a low-rate mortgage. It was a mystery how the banks did it, but this was their business; we trusted they knew what they were doing. Our banks resold the mortgages to aggregators who bunched them up with thousands of other subprime mortgages, chopped the package into pieces and sold them as corporate bonds to parties looking for extra yield. Our mortgage payments paid for the interest on the bonds.

For twenty years securitizations and derivatives were great at concocting extra yield and allowing the banks to hide their debt. Broadly speaking, a derivative is any contract that derives its value from another underlying asset. More narrowly and pertinently, it's an instrument that allows investors to speculate on the future price of something without having to buy it. The words that are used for this business-securitization, insurance, diversifying risk-sound reassuring, but they mask that the business is pure high-leveraged speculation and gambling. Credit-default swaps are private contracts in a completely unregulated market that allow investors to bet on whether a borrower will default. Ten years ago that market was \$150 billion; today it's \$62 trillion, and it's at the heart of the meltdown. Credit default sellers are not required to set aside reserves to pay off claims, and in 2000 Congress exempted them from state gaming laws. AIG's derivatives unit was a huge casino, selling phantom insurance with hardly any backing, for which we now have to pay. The tally for the past six months: four bailouts, \$160 billion, some very hard-to-take bonus payments, and no bottom in sight for a sinkhole of toxic debt exceeding \$1 trillion.

Derivatives created dangerous incentives for false accounting and made it extremely difficult to ascertain a firm's true exposure. They generated huge amounts of leverage and were developed with virtually no consideration of their broad economic consequences.

So many plugged-in players rode this financial lunacy for all it was worth, caught in the terribly real pressure of the market to produce constant short-term gains. Speculators gamed the system and regulators looked the other way. Mortgage brokers sold bad mortgages; bond bundlers packaged the loans into securities; rating agencies gave inflated bond ratings to the loans; corporate executives put the bonds on their balance sheets; and all made fortunes off toxic products they had no business creating or passing off. The chief rating agencies, Moody's and Standard & Poor's, were supposed to expose financial risk. Instead, paid by the very issuers of the bonds they rated, they hung triple-A ratings on rubbish. There was so much money to be made that firms couldn't bear to leave it aside for competitors to grab. The banks got leveraged up to 50-to-1 (that's where Bear Stearns was at the end) and kept piling on debt. The mania for extra yield fed on itself, blowing away business ethics and common sense.

Today we are staring into an economic abyss, a global deflationary spiral. Deflation, once started, has a terrible tendency to feed on itself. Income falls in a recession, which makes debt harder to bear, which discourages investment, which depresses the economy further, which leads to more deflation. To have any chance of breaking the deflationary spiral, the Obama administration has to solve the bank problem and dispose of the toxic debt.

One option is Henry Paulson's original plan, "cash for trash," this time with more public accountability. Another is to ramp up the insurance approach, "ring-fencing" bad assets by providing federal guarantees against losses. But these are more-of-the-same options that coddle the banks and don't solve the valuation problem-that no one trusts anyone else's balance sheet. The banks are holding at least \$2 trillion of toxic debt. For the past six months, the banking system has been paralyzed because the big private equity firms and hedge funds are refusing to pay more than thirty cents on the dollar for the mortgage bundles and the banks can't stay in business if they book such huge losses on their holdings. In the meantime the banks are holding out for at least sixty cents and pleading for more relief.

The Latest Bailout Fad: Creating Bad Banks

The third option, the "bad bank" model, creates transitional banks to soak up bad debt. Here the risk of getting prices wrong is even greater, assuming that assets are valued immediately. If the government overpays for toxic securities, taxpayers are cheated; if it doesn't overpay and the banks take mark-to-market prices, many are sure to fail. Some advocates of the bad bank strategy say the government could stall on the price issue, waiting until values rise, but FDIC chair Sheila Bair says no, banking is not alchemy: assets can't be floated into the ether.

Bair and Timothy Geithner have settled on an aggregator bank model that blends the original Paulson plan with some elements of the bad bank topped off with an auction scheme to find private buyers for the toxic debt. Geithner wants the government to create a \$2 trillion public-private investment fund that subsidizes up to 95 percent of deals partnered with hedge funds and private equity firms to buy up the bad assets of the zombie banks. The private funds will end up owning the assets; the FDIC will do most of the partnering work; and the Treasury will hire four or five investment management firms.

Since this is apparently what we're going to do, I certainly hope it works. But this plan is by far the most cumbersome and least transparent strategy of all. It coddles the banks. It is based on the dubious hope of finding enough private buyers for rotten goods. It assumes that private fund managers have been wrong thus far about the real value of the mortgage bundles. It offers a taxpayer guarantee to investors to ensure they won't lose money if they get in. And it depends on convincing taxpayers to pony up another \$2 trillion for that purpose. Essentially, this is a scheme to pay fantastic bribes to private investors to buy the bad assets for more than they're worth.

Here's A Better Idea: Let's Create Good Banks!

I am for biting the bullet now. It's obscene to keep paying off the very people who created this disaster. It's better to take control of the situation now than to dither for another nine or ten months while we lose 600,000 jobs per month. At some point moral fairness and accountability have to enter this picture. We should nationalize the zombie banks, transfer the bad assets to a reincarnation of the 1980s Resolution Trust Corporation, and sell off the sellable parts to new owners.

Nationalization is cleaner and more transparent than the alternatives. It takes hold of the valuation problem by finding the bottom. It cuts off the gusher of taxpayer gifts to managers and shareholders. It offers taxpayers a way of getting some of their money back. It puts an end to mergers between zombie banks, which create more zombie banks that are too big to fail.

Most importantly to me, an aggressive nationalization strategy would put into play the possibility of something more creative and constructive: establishing publicly funded venture capital banks. If we can seriously talk about creating bad banks or aggregator banks, we ought to be able to talk about creating publicly owned good banks to do good things. Public banks could finance start-ups in green technology that are currently languishing and provide financing for cooperatives spurned by traditional banks. The public banks could be financed by an economic stimulus package, or by claiming the good assets of banks seized by the government, or both.

We must push Obama for him to create anything like that, as he is surrounded by centrist corporate establishment types eager to placate Wall Street and averse to wiping out shareholders. We must also push him to stick to a social investment strategy throughout his presidency, instead of backing off from it as Franklin Roosevelt did.

A public bank that supported green technology and cooperatives would be a major breakthrough for economic democracy in this country. Economic democracy is about democratizing power and creating environmentally sustainable economies. In its full-orbed version, it features mixed forms of worker, community, and mutual fund or public bank enterprises. I am not suggesting that factors of production trump everything else. Any social justice politics worthy of the name requires a feminist, interracial, multicultural, ecological, and anti-imperial consciousness that privileges liberationist and environmental issues.

But no serious challenge to existing relations of power can ignore the factors of production. Economic justice is never dispensable. Those who control the terms, amounts, and direction of credit play a huge role in determining the kind of society that everybody else lives in. We're getting a dramatic demonstration of that today. The question of who controls the process of investment is enormously important. Gains toward social and economic democracy are needed today for the same reason that political democracy is necessary: to restrain the abuse of unequal power.

Pros and Cons of Economic Democracy

Economic democracy, like political democracy, is messy and time-consuming. Democratically controlled capital is less mobile than corporate capital, and the return to democratically controlled capital tends to be lower than in corporations, because worker-controlled enterprises are more committed to keeping low-return firms in operation. Producer cooperatives are often too slow, small, and humane to compete with corporations, and they require cooperative habits and values that cut against the grain of American individualism. In the United States, any strategy to break down concentrated economic power by expanding the cooperative sector confronts difficult trade-offs, political opposition, and cultural barriers.

But economic democracy also has pragmatic considerations in its favor. Economic losses caused by worker participation can be offset by gains in productivity made possible by it. People often work harder and more efficiently when they have a stake in the company. Worker ownership is a key option for communities threatened by runaway plants and deindustrialization. Experiments with various kinds of worker ownership increased dramatically in the 1990s, aided by a growing network of policy experts, and some unions began to bargain for worker ownership, worker control over pension funds, and worker management rights. These developments have the potential to become the building blocks of a serious movement for economic democracy.

Today there are approximately 12,000 worker-owned firms in the United States, including large enterprises such as Republic Engineered Steels, Publix Supermarkets, and Northwestern Steel and Wire. Most employee ownership plans offer shares without voting rights; most assure that employees will be kept in a minority ownership position; few provide educational opportunities to help worker/owners develop management skills; and virtually none offer programs to build solidarity or help worker/owners forge links with other cooperative enterprises or raise awareness of economic democracy issues. Worker ownership without democratic control is a nominal version of economic democracy, thwarting the real thing, and American unions have a generally dismal record in this area, reinforcing the shortcomings.

With all its limitations, however, worker ownership is a viable option, and a necessary one. The Mondragon network in Spain is spectacularly successful; in the United States, several thousand firms have converted to employee ownership, thousands of others have been launched with worker-ownership plans, and approximately 1,000 companies in the United States are fully worker-controlled.

It Begins by Building the Cooperative Sector

Full-orbed economic democracy is obviously far off. On the way to something like it, economic democracy is about building up institutions that do not belong wholly to the capitalist market or the state. It begins by expanding the cooperative sector. Producer cooperatives take labor out of the market by removing corporate shares from the stock market and maintaining local worker ownership. Community land trusts take land out of the market and place it under local

democratic controls to serve the social needs of communities. Community finance corporations take democratic control over capital to finance cooperative firms, make investments in areas of social need, and fight the redlining policies of banks. These strategies widen the base of social and economic power by mixing together cooperative banks, employee stock ownership plans, producer cooperatives, community land trusts, and planning agencies that guide investments into locally defined areas of need such as housing, soft-energy hardware, infrastructure maintenance, and mass transit.

But merely expanding the cooperative sector is not enough. Cooperatives usually prohibit non-working shareholders, so they attract less outside financing than capitalist firms. They are committed to keeping low-return firms in operation, so they tend to stay in business even when they can't afford to pay competitive wages. They are committed to particular communities, so they are less mobile than corporate capital and labor. They smack of anti-capitalist bias, so they have trouble getting financing and advice from capitalist banks. They tend to maximize net income per worker rather than profits, so they tend to favor capital-intensive investments over job creation. And because cooperative owners often have their savings invested in a single enterprise, they tend to avoid risky innovations.

These problems can be mitigated with productivity-enhancing tax incentives and regulations. Cooperative economics and ecological sustainability are naturally linked by the necessity of creating structural alternatives to the capitalist fantasy of unlimited growth. The kind of economic development that favors the needs of poor and disenfranchised communities and does not harm the earth's environment requires a dramatically expanded cooperative sector consisting of worker-owned firms rooted in communities, committed to survival, and prepared to accept lower returns.

But worker ownership does not do enough for equality, especially in the highest-yielding cooperatives, which nearly always have high entry fees. Rather than allow members to sell out to the highest bidder and take their capital gains, most cooperatives require members to sell out to the company. This policy guards against reverting to traditional capitalist ownership, but in cooperatives with high share prices, one has to be rather well off or very determined to apply. One might address the equality problem by universalizing cooperation, but that would ruin a mostly good thing. If everyone had to belong to a cooperative, the entry fees would be waved and many enterprises would fail.

Better Social Ownership Models

We need forms of social ownership that facilitate democratic capital formation, have a greater capacity for scaling up, and are more entrepreneurial. Specifically, we need forms of economic democracy featuring public banks and mutual funded holding companies. This approach can take a variety of forms, but the essential idea is to establish competing banks or holding companies in which ownership of productive capital is vested. The companies lend capital to enterprises at market rates of interest and otherwise control the process of investment, including decision-making power to initiate new cooperatives and shut down unprofitable firms. Equity shareholders, the state, and/or other cooperatives own the holding companies or public banks.

Unfortunately there is a lot more theory on this subject than concrete examples of it. The theorists include Peter Abell, Raymond Plant, Alec Nove, Saul Estrin, David Miller, John Roemer, Robert Dahl, Joanne Barkan, Gar Alperovitz, Radoslav Selucky, Otto Sik, Thomas Weisskopf, and David Winter. The biggest experiment thus far was the Meidner Plan in Sweden, named after German economist Rudolf Meidner, which was enacted in 1982 by the Social Democratic government. It called for an annual 20 percent tax on major company profits to be paid in the form of stock to eight regional mutual funds. Worker, consumer, and government representatives controlled the funds, and as their proportion of stock ownership grew, these groups were collectively entitled to representation on company boards. If fully carried out, this experiment would have rendered effective control over profitable firms in Sweden to the worker and public organizations. But the Social Democrats made little effort to educate the public about it or win popular support for it. For eight years Sweden's corporate class railed against it constantly. The Meidner Plan's term expired in 1990, and especially after the Swedish banking crisis of 1992, the Social Democrats lost their enthusiasm for it. That made political sense for them at the outset of second-wave globalization. It may prove to be the death knell for large-scale experiments in full-orbed economic democracy.

But less ambitious forms of economic democracy have succeeded in many places, and the scale question rests on politics and culture more than economic viability. Public bank theory takes seriously the failures of state socialism, the limitations of worker ownership, and the necessity of building up highly capitalized forms of economic democracy. The distinct advantage of this approach is that it diversifies forms of risk sharing and promotes greater efficiency by forcing firms to be financially accountable to a broad range of investors. Essentially, it is a solution to the entrepreneurial deficiencies of worker ownership, addressing conflicts of interest between cooperative owners and profitability that cause cooperatives to miss market signals.

There Can Be No Socialist Blueprint or Magic Wand

This approach does not rest on idealistic notions about human nature and it should not be the next progressive blueprint. Economic democracy is a brake on human greed and domination; the whole point of it is to fight the universal propensity of dominant groups to hoard social goods and abuse disenfranchised people. Neither should progressives absolutize any particular model of economic democracy, for the blueprint mentality is inherently problematic. Socialists were wrong to equate socialization with nationalization. They were wrong to reject production for profit, wrong to think that state planners could replicate the complex pricing decisions of markets, and wrong in trying to organize an economy not linked by markets. Not all Socialist traditions made these mistakes, but the blueprint mentality was deeply ingrained in virtually all of them.

From a democratic perspective, the key problem with the mutual fund model is that it weakens workers' power at the firm level. To the extent that the holding companies are granted supervisory control over their client enterprises, worker control is diminished. To the extent that the holding companies are kept in a weak position, the advantages of the mutual fund model are traded off as the enterprises essentially become cooperatives.

I have a theory about how to deal with that problem-it's a circular scheme modeled on Mondragon's "second degree" cooperatives that upholds the authority of the holding companies-but more important than any particular theory or model is the willingness to expand the social market in different ways and find out which models work best in particular circumstances. The tradition of Christian social ethics and progressive theology to which I belong has an ample history on this subject. The father of the social gospel, Washington Gladden, believed that profit-sharing industrial partnerships would put an end to the class struggle, until he lived long enough to see otherwise. The founder of social ethics, Francis G. Peabody, shared the conviction of most social gospelers that cooperatives were obviously the progressive Christian solution. The greatest social gospeler, Walter Rauschenbusch, believed that a combination of state and cooperative ownership would create a good society. Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple developed a type of guild socialism featuring a Meidner-like plan for worker-controlled collective capital funds. Reinhold Niebuhr stood for radical state Socialism before opting for the welfare state. Many liberationists and social ethicists have promoted "socialism" without describing what it is.

Most of this tradition wrongly operated with unitary ideas of capitalism and socialism, as though each were only one thing, culminating in the liberationist tendency to condemn "capitalism" categorically while employing "socialism" as a magic wand. The latter approach is too vague, monolithic, and evasive, but neither should social justice movements embrace any particular model as the next sign of the divine commonwealth.

The Better Way: Organic, Pluralistic, Pragmatic, Voluntary

Economic democracy must be a project built from the ground up, piece by piece, opening new choices, creating more democracy, building an economic order that allows for social contracts, common goods, and ecological flourishing. Economic democracy nurtures and sustains social trust: social capital that no healthy society can do without. It is a project that breaks from the universalizing logic of state socialism and takes seriously that there are different kinds of capitalism. Social theorist Roberto M. Unger calls for "alternative pluralisms," step-by-step constructions of alternative political and economic institutions. Abstract concepts of a monolithic "capitalism" or "market" obscure the variety of possibilities within existing capitalism and markets. So-called "capitalism" is always the product of particular historical configurations, contingencies, and struggles.

The tests of any experiment in economic democracy are pragmatic. To impose something like the Mondragon network on a capitalist society would require coercion over workers who don't want to belong to cooperatives. The U.S. Pacific Northwest has a network of longstanding, highly successful plywood cooperatives. Some plywood workers choose to work in conventional firms instead of the cooperatives. No political economy worth building would force them into a different choice.

The issue of choice, however, is the key to a better alternative. A politics that expanded the cooperative and social ownership sectors would give workers important new choices. The central conceit of neoclassical economics could be turned into a reality if meaningful choices were created. The neoclassical conceit is that capitalism doesn't exploit anyone, because labor employs capital as much as capital employs labor. But in the real world the owners of capital nearly always organize the factors of production. To expand the cooperative and other social market sectors would give choices to workers that neoclassical theory promises, but does not deliver. It would show that there is an alternative to a system that stokes and celebrates greed and consumption to the point of self-destruction.

The earth's ecosystem cannot sustain a U.S.-level lifestyle for more than one-sixth of the world's population. The economy is physical. There are limits to economic growth. Global warming is melting the Arctic ice cap at a shocking pace. It is melting large areas of permafrost in Alaska, Canada, and Siberia, and destroying wetlands and forests around the world. The manic logic of corporate capitalism pays little heed to communities and the environment, and none to equality. Corporate giants like ExxonMobil succeed as businesses and investments while treating the destructive aspects of their behavior as someone else's problem.

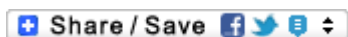
For thirty years one had to be a stubborn type to sail against the religion of the market. Now one only needs to be awake. If the stubborn types can seize this terrible moment as an opportunity to build a better social order, we may actually do it.

Gary Dorrien is the Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and Professor of Religion at Columbia University. An Episcopal priest and author of thirteen books, including a trilogy on liberal theology, he has a long history of involvement in anti-imperialist and racial justice organizations.

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Saturday, August 7, 2010

[James B. Quilligan: Beyond State Capitalism](#)

Local examples of co-governance and co-production of shared resources are emerging around the world in the creation of social charters and commons trusts. Can the global public organize effectively as a 'third power' to develop a worldwide commons economy?

Beyond State Capitalism: The Commons Economy in our Lifetimes

By James B. Quilligan [article link](#) [article link](#)

2nd August 2010 | On the Commons | Share The World's Resources

In considering the essential problem of how to produce and distribute material wealth, virtually all of the great economists in Western history have ignored the significance of the commons — the shared resources of nature and society that people

inherit, create and utilize. Despite sharp differences in concept and ideology, economic thinkers from Smith, Ricardo, and Marx to Keynes, Hayek, Mises and Schumpeter largely based their assumptions on the world's seemingly unlimited resources and fossil fuels, their infinite potential for creating economic growth, adequate supplies of labor for developing them, and the evolving monoculture of state capitalism responsible for their provision and allocation. Hence, in the Market State that has emerged, corporations and sovereign states make decisions on the production and distribution of Earth's common resources more or less as a unitary system — with minimal participation from the people who depend on these commons for their livelihood and well-being. Because our forbears did not account for the biophysical flow of material resources from the environment through the production process and back into the environment, the real worth of natural resources and social labor is not factored into the economy. It is this centralized, hierarchical model that has led to the degradation and devaluation of our commons.

Over the past seventy years especially, the macroeconomic goals of sovereign states — for high levels and rapid growth of output, low unemployment and stable prices — have resulted in a highly dysfunctional world. The global economy has integrated dramatically in recent decades through financial and trade liberalization; yet the market is failing to protect natural and social resources, the state is failing to rectify the economic system, and the global polity is failing to manage its mounting imbalances in global resources and wealth. Without a 'unified field theory' of economics to explain how the commons is drastically undervalued and why world society is amassing huge debts to the environment, the poor and future generations, policymakers and their institutions lack the critical tools and support to address the massive instability that is now gripping the global economy. Businesses and governments are facing the Herculean challenge of reducing climate change and pollution while alleviating poverty without economic growth — a task for which the Market State is neither prepared nor designed to handle.

Meanwhile, the essential ideals of state capitalism — the rule-based systems of government enforcement and the spontaneous, self-regulating social order of markets — are finding direct expression in the co-governance and co-production of common goods by people in localities across the world. Whether these commons are traditional (rivers, forests, indigenous cultures) or emerging (energy, intellectual property, internet), communities are successfully managing them through collaboration and collective action. This growing movement has also begun to create social charters and commons trusts — formal instruments which define the incentives, rights and responsibilities of stakeholders for the supervision and protection of common resources. Ironically, by organizing to protect their commons through decentralized decision-making, the democratic principles of freedom and equality are being realized more fully in these resource communities than through the enterprises and policies of the Market State.

These evolving dynamics — the decommodification of common goods through co-governance and the deterritorialization of value through co-production — are shattering the liberal assumptions which underlie state capitalism. The emergence of this new kind of management and valuation for the preservation of natural and social assets is posing a momentous crisis for the Market State, imperiling the functional legitimacy of state sovereignty, national currencies, domestic fiscal policy, international trade and finance, and the global monetary system. Major changes are on the way. The transformation of modern political economy will involve reconnecting with — and reformulating — a pre-analytic vision of the post-macroeconomic global commons. Another world is coming: where common goods are capped and protected; a portion of these resources are rented to businesses for the production and consumption of private goods; and taxes on their use are redistributed by the state as public goods to provide a social income for the marginalized and to repair and restore the depleted commons.

Although people's rights to their commons are often recognized and validated in smaller communities, scaling these lessons to the global level will require a new dimension of popular legitimacy and authority. The world community is rapidly evolving a sense of social interconnectivity, shared responsibility and global citizenship, yet the sovereign rights of people to the global commons have not been fully articulated. In declaring our planetary rights for these commons, we shall be confronting many decisive questions:

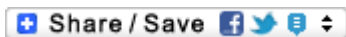
(1) Are modern societies prepared to create a framework in which the incentives behind production and governance are not private capital and debt-based growth, but human solidarity, quality of life and ecological sustainability?

- (2) How soon — and how peacefully — will the subsystems of the Market State integrate their structures of value-creation and sovereign governance with the greater biophysical system of ecological and social interdependence?
- (3) Can the global public organize effectively as a third power to develop checks and balances on the private and public sectors and establish the resource sovereignty and preservation value needed for a commons economy?

These issues will be filtering into mainstream discussion over the next two decades. Already the system of state capitalism is breaking down, threatening the entire planet, its institutions and species. When this collapse can no longer be contained and a global monetary crisis ensues, world society will have the choice of creating an economic system that follows the universal laws of biophysics and commons preservation — or accepting a new version of 18th-20th century mechanistic economics, obliging humanity to continue living off the common capital of the planet under corporate feudalism and über-militaristic regimes. Our decision will likely come down to this: global commons or global autarchy. As an economist, I don't pretend to speak for the conscience of humanity; but as a human being, my heart tells me that we shall see the beginnings of a commons economy in our lifetimes. The long-forsaken global commons are beckoning.

James Bernard Quilligan has been an analyst and administrator in the field of international development since 1975. He has served as policy advisor and writer for many international politicians and leaders, including Pierre Trudeau, François Mitterand, Edward Heath, Julius Nyerere, Olof Palme, Willy Brandt, Jimmy Carter, and His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan of Jordan.

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[Patrick Martin: US War Criminals Threaten WikiLeaks, Private Manning](#)

US War Criminals Threaten WikiLeaks, Private Manning

By Patrick Martin [article link](#) [article link](#)

06 August, 2010 | WSWS | CounterCurrents

The drumbeat of calls for repression and violence against [WikiLeaks](#) and [Private Bradley Manning](#) is a major threat to democratic rights. All sections of the US political establishment, Democratic and Republican, liberal and conservative, are seeking to retaliate against those who are exposing atrocities by the US military in Afghanistan and Iraq, and intimidate all critics of these wars of aggression by American imperialism.

The most strident rhetoric has come from the ultra-right. Republican Congressman Mike Rogers of Michigan, a former FBI agent who sits on the House Intelligence Committee, told a local radio station Monday that he thought the death penalty would be appropriate punishment for Manning if he is convicted on charges of leaking classified military documents to WikiLeaks.

Pfc. Manning, who worked at an Army intelligence facility in Iraq, is now imprisoned at the Quantico, Virginia Marine Corps base, awaiting trial on charges that he supplied WikiLeaks with classified video of a US helicopter gunship mowing down Iraqi civilians in a Baghdad neighborhood in 2007. Pentagon officials have also named Manning a "person of interest" in the leak of 92,000 classified after-action reports dating from 2004 to 2010 on operations in Afghanistan, which document the killing of hundreds of Afghan civilians.

Speaking to radio station WHMI August 2, Rogers declared, "I argue the death penalty clearly should be considered here. He clearly aided the enemy to what may result in the death of US soldiers or those cooperating. If that is not a capital offense, I don't know what is."

Rogers was referring to media claims, echoing Pentagon propaganda, that Afghan informants and spies who are aiding the US military could be targeted by the Taliban for retaliation if their names are uncovered in the files made public by WikiLeaks. "We know for a fact that people will likely be killed because of this information being disclosed," he continued. "That's pretty serious. If they don't charge him with treason, they ought to charge him with murder."

Right-wing media pundits have called for a direct assault by the US government on WikiLeaks. On Fox News Sunday, commentator Liz Cheney, daughter of the former vice-president, called on the Obama administration to shut down the Internet-based organization, presumably through the use of the Pentagon's cyber warfare capability.

On Tuesday, in a column in the Washington Post, former Bush White House aide Marc A. Thiessen, now a weekly contributor to the newspaper, said the government should kidnap and imprison Julian Assange, co-founder of WikiLeaks.

"WikiLeaks is not a news organization; it is a criminal enterprise," Thiessen declared. "Its reason for existence is to obtain classified national security information and disseminate it as widely as possible—including to the United States' enemies." He argued that there is ample precedent for using the powers of "rendition" exercised by the CIA against those engaged in "material support for terrorism"

"Assange is a non-US citizen operating outside the territory of the United States," he wrote. "This means the government has a wide range of options for dealing with him. It can employ not only law enforcement but also intelligence and military assets to bring Assange to justice and put his criminal syndicate out of business."

Thiessen contended that if Iceland or Belgium refused to extradite him, "the United States can arrest Assange on their territory without their knowledge or approval." Under existing US law, he claimed, "we do not need permission to apprehend Assange or his co-conspirators anywhere in the world."

Liberal Democrats have chimed in with their own proposals to target Wikileaks. According to a report Wednesday in the New York Times, two Senate Democrats, Charles Schumer of New York and Diane Feinstein of California, are drafting an amendment to the "media shield" legislation now being considered in Congress "to make clear that the bill's protections extend only to traditional news-gathering activities and not to web sites that serve as a conduit for the mass dissemination of secret documents."

The bill was originally drafted in response to a series of cases in which reporters were jailed for refusing to disclose their sources to judges, prosecutors or plaintiffs in lawsuits. In order to avoid WikiLeaks taking advantage of such a shield law, Schumer and Feinstein want to specifically exclude whistleblower sites.

The Times quoted Paul J. Boyle, senior vice president for public policy at the Newspaper Association of America, the industry trade group, endorsing such a policy, which would reserve this type of First Amendment protection for "traditional news organizations subject to American law and having editorial controls and experience in news judgment." In other words, such safeguards would be reserved to the corporate-controlled media, run by people loyal to the American ruling elite and the capitalist state.

The major concern of those targeting WikiLeaks and Private Manning is that the leaks of internal government documents provide evidence to justify war crimes prosecution of US government officials, past and present. To save their own skins, they want to criminalize the exposure of these atrocities, rather than the atrocities themselves.

The language being employed in media and official circles is dangerous and chilling. It makes clear that nine years of uninterrupted military aggression have provided the basis for major attacks on democratic rights in the United States and the preparation of more openly dictatorial forms of rule.

Launched on the basis of systematic lying, both about the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the supposed danger of "weapons of mass destruction," these wars are criminal in every sense of the word. Millions have been killed, maimed or driven from their homes, and more than five thousand Americans have died to advance the interests of US imperialism in the oil rich Persian Gulf and Central Asia.

Officials of the Bush and Obama administrations are manifestly guilty of war crimes, ranging from launching aggressive war—the core charge against the Nazis in Nuremberg—to the systematic assassination of opponents in both Iraq and Afghanistan. This last practice, documented by WikiLeaks in the activities of Army Task Force 373 in Afghanistan, is a full-scale repetition of one of the principal horrors of the Vietnam War, the CIA's Phoenix Program, which murdered 20,000 suspected supporters of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front.

After the Phoenix Program was exposed in the US media, including the publication of the Pentagon Papers, government-sponsored assassination became politically discredited and was officially outlawed—until the onset of the "war on terror." Now such methods are being effectively legalized, as politicians of both parties, backed by their media apologists, boast of their right to "take out" opponents, using bombs, missiles or direct hand-to-hand violence.

WikiLeaks and Private Manning are being targeted because they have done what a cowardly and spineless media has refused to do—tell the truth about the crimes of American imperialism. Working people in the United States and around the world must demand the dropping of all threats and charges against WikiLeaks, an end to the government harassment and targeting of whistleblowers, and the immediate release of Private Bradley Manning.

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Bradley Manning Support Network [home page](#)

Bradley Manning: An American Hero

By Stephen Lendman [article link](#)

August 7, 2010 | OpEdNews

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by: Barry Eisler [article link](#)

07 August 2010 | t r u t h o u t | Op-Ed

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Why Leaders Must Be Held Accountable For Crimes

By Sherwood Ross [article link](#)

July 27, 2010 | OpEdNews

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by John Pilger [article link](#) [article link](#)

August 5, 2010 | John Pilger | Global Research

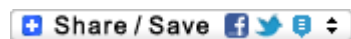
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The War on Iraq: Five US Presidents, Five British Prime Ministers, Thirty Years of Duplicity, and Counting....

by Felicity Arbuthnot [article link](#)

August 6, 2010 | Global Research

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Gulam Mitha: Economic Justification For America's Next War

Economic Justification For America's Next War

By Gulam Mitha [article link](#)

August 06, 2010 | CounterCurrents

December 2007 was the start of the global recession which after 21 months would be termed as the Great Recession. The consensus of a recovery is in doubt in spite of the massive stimulus from USA, Europe, Japan and Canada. Bernanke on 21 July 2010 “warned” Congress that the economic outlook remains unusually uncertain. The global stimulus packages have been between US\$ 1.25 and 1.5 trillion; with such massive injection, it was expected that the global economies would recover within 12-18 months and yet there is nothing but grey colors over the economic horizons. Why is the economy sluggish and what’s in it for a recovery by 2011 ? In order to answer the question, we need to look back over the past decade and examine the causes of the great recession and lessons learnt from the previous recessions.

I’ve been a witness to 6 recessions over the past 40 years, but none as worse than this last one. Contraction and expansion cycles are normal phenomena that occur in nature. The global economic crisis, part of a business cycle contraction, was one that essentially went out of control due to various factors, the principal ones being excessive speculation and greed. The warning signs of an economic slowdown were quite visible as early as 2006 and several economists had started to fire warning shots. Hearing the alarm bells, I was beginning to warn privately about the state of the economy.

I was in USA during the recessions of 1969-1970 and 1973-1974 and in Canada during the global recession of 1981-82 that had lasted 16 months.. The latter was mainly because oil prices had begun to spiral from \$ 14 in 1978 to \$ 40 by 1981-82 due to Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war and the drive by OECD countries to become independent of Middle East oil . Businesses had scurried to find new energy sources in Europe, Canada, USA, Far East and S. America. Business expansion in the energy sector as well as stock market and housing speculation consumed much of the money supply leading up to inflation in the double digit teens. China and India were not part of the economic party then. Though the recovery started in 1984-85 as interest rates eased, full recovery did not occur till the 1991 Gulf War. The trough to peak expansion following that recession was 8 years.

On 29 October 2009, Mark Zandi Chief Economist and founder of Moody’s economy.com in a written statement before the US Congress Joint Economic Committee (JEC) stated that the great recession had finally come to an end in the US primarily due to the fiscal stimulus of \$ 787 billion and that the economy was on the road to recovery. The recession had lasted 20 months with nearly 9 million lost jobs. As a result of the fiscal stimulus, the US has eased out of the recession but the unemployment continues at a sluggish 9%. The cause of the recession was an unprecedented global business expansion which included China and India, global credit consumer spending, housing and stock market speculation, oil prices rising from US\$ 35 in 2005 to \$147 by mid-2008 and the Credit Default Swaps. No wonder, the G7 nations had to inject such massive stimulus to save the economy and prevent a truly global depression.

The US is the economic engine that drives the global economic train. The world has been saving to satisfy the US thirst for consumer goods. 10 months out of a recession and a fragile recovery, there is more than \$2 trillion stuck in the economic pipeline of which businesses are sitting on a mountain of \$1 trillion. Businesses are unwilling to take the risks to kick start a growth towards recovery due to unusually uncertain circumstances.

The US economy is war based and has always been so. Expansions following contractions have been due to wars. Its not as if the US will not enter another war but more so where. The possible theatres are the Korean Peninsula, Iran or Pakistan. A war will be the catalyst that will flush the economic pipeline towards a business expansion, high profits, full employment of 4-5% and a GDP growth of 4-6% over 3-5 years. Every major expansion cycle has followed a war. The 1991-2001 trough to peak expansion followed the Gulf War and the 2002-2008 trough to peak expansion followed the Afghanistan and Iraq wars . The average peak to trough recession and trough to peak expansion cycles have been historically 10 months and 57 months, respectively. The US has barely nudged out of a recession over the past 10 months. If the historical business cycles in the US are any indicators, the US will likely enter another war between 2011 and 2012 to commence the business cycle of trough to peak expansion.

It should be borne in mind that China is the biggest creditor nation of the US. As reported in The Washington Times of 2 March 2010, according to Simon Johnson, Professor of Economics at MIT, it is estimated that China holds \$ 1 trillion in US Treasury securities which is approximately 42-45% of the total Treasury debt held by “foreign ownership”. By no means is China the banker for the US; the world is. In the same Washington Times news, Major General Luo Yuan of Peoples Liberation Army and member of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), said that China could sanction the US by economic means such as dumping US government bonds. China is now the second largest economy outstripping Japan but the US is far more advanced in economic and monetary management. By no means can China threaten economic sanctions on the US nor is its military and political strength equal to that of the US which is mainly due to the North Atlantic alliance. China stands out as a finger in strength whereas the alliance is like five fingers than make up a fist.

China and Russia have both supported the Iran sanctions and that they do not intend to be left out of a business expansion due to the forthcoming war, most likely in Iran. China and Russia have been past beneficiaries of Afghanistan and Iraq wars also. There is no bigger corporate profits, higher government taxes and consumer spending than in wars. But the costs in human lives and sufferings cannot be condoned.

The next war will economically benefit the UN-5—US, UK, France, Russia and China—as well as their allies. The UN-5 need to sell and test their military hardware by replenishing their existing inventory in a war and sell the outdated ones to the Arabs, share the spoils of war and begin production of the next generation of deadly weapons for the next after next war. Even the existing generation of conventional weapons and WMDs can wipe off this civilization to a great extent. If all goes as per Iran plan, Pakistan may be next. My good friend NH reminded me the other day of Arundhati Roy’s words “superpowers don’t need friends; they only need agents”. The only three remaining non-agents of USA or better yet UN-5 are Iran, Syria and N. Korea, jointly the axis of evil.

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Preparing for World War III, Targeting Iran

Part I: Global Warfare

by Michel Chossudovsky [article link](#)

August 1, 2010 | Global Research

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Western Wars Are Preplanned?

by Staff Report [article link](#)

August 06, 2010 | The Daily Bell

Iran War to Advance Global Currency?

by Staff Report [article link](#) [article link](#)

August 06, 2010 | The Daily Bell

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What Collapsing Empire Looks Like

Does anyone doubt that once a society ceases to be able to afford schools, public transit, paved roads, libraries and street lights -- or once it chooses not to be able to afford those things in pursuit of imperial priorities and the maintenance of a vast Surveillance and National Security State -- that a very serious problem has arisen, that things have gone seriously awry, that imperial collapse, by definition, is an imminent inevitability?

By Glenn Greenwald [article link](#) [article link](#)

August 06, 2010 | Salon | ICH

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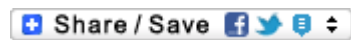
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The Peace Vision

by: Peter G. Cohen [article link](#)

07 August 2010 | t r u t h o u t | Op-Ed

truthout [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:59 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, August 6, 2010

Violence and War are Acts of Weakness

MM Book 1 Chapter 2-23

Corporate business is predatory, and WAR [*adversarial* claim] is its agency: BUSINESS *IS* WARFARE !! — God is celebration, “soul discovery”, expansion of life and peace, NOT suicide, ecocide, deicide: THE ATTEMPTED DESTRUCTION OF GOD(-ing) AND HIS/OUR CREATION !! — all forms of conflict is conflict against God(-ing) !! — LIFE IN THE MIDST OF GOD and GOD IN THE MIDST OF LIFE: to destroy life is to destroy God !! — ** WAR IS CLAIM AGAINST GOD ** [domination NOT dominion (stewardship)] — God has taken responsibility for us, our decision(s) [our death], by-and-through Jesus Christ — COSMOLOGY [Book of Job], the experience of AWE, GOD FAMILY !! — the US/UK are deeply entrenched in war [denial of family, of God]: those who were gifted with so much [to give], taking more, claiming all [future war] !! — sanitized “collateral damage” is NOT “innocent loss of life”, the unavoidable war-death of [innocent] civilians is a crime [collateral damage = sacrificial deaths (idolatry)] and reason enough to avoid/stop conflict; ** WAR IS AN ATROCITY, IT IS *NOT* “SACRED” TERROR AND VENGEANCE AGAINST GOD’S ENEMIES: WAR IS *NOT* HOLY !! ** — Deut. 32 “To me belongeth vengeance and recompense”, Nahum 1 “The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries” [GOD’S JUSTICE OF LOVE]; those who conduct war [no matter the excuse] are the adversaries of God !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 2-24

An economy predicated upon endless consumption, where the other fellows well-being is dependent on another’s irresponsibility [vs. stewardship] *to* him [reciprocal evil as reward], is insanity and cannot be maintained without [corporate] slavery; a consumer society can only include a small percentage of human-kind: infinite growth predicated upon finite resources is insane, an impossibility and requires the use of force to secure the increasingly scarce resources [CONSUMPTION IS A DISEASE]; mercenary [national] armed-forces in the service of the corporate is a crime against humanity [OUR ADVERSARIAL COVENANT "termed" peace, democracy, liberation] — the death of [our] human-ity to support and maintain an evil, idol systemic is a “crime against God” !! — most social “voices” just parrot the loud corporate-media voice; God is “a still, small voice” that necessitates *pause* to hear, a “Sabbath of time” to comprehend — “peace protest” utilizing confrontation and violence is a contradiction in ideology: PEACE/GOD IS NOT ADVERSARIAL [of the adversary (opposed to God)] !! — our only weapon is our refusal [our "wisdoming" the Word of God] to participate: WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CORPORATE IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR LIVES [the corporate definition: the MARK vs. our Being (Moses), our Doing (Elijah)] !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 2-25

The more money-wealth grows, the more all else dies !! — most do NOT want to know, they don’t see the problem(s) [we see what we know]; if we know God, we will see through-and-by the Word of God [eyes as "flames of fire"] !! — WHAT *MIND* ARE WE, WHO OR WHAT IS “MIND-ING” US ?? — the “displacement” of God by our idols, our icons, whom we dedicate to Him !! — the corporate/business community of self-interest must be withdrawn from; predication upon “evil works” is NOT the Way of God !! — violence in any form is NOT a solution [to anything]; *weak* minds resort to violence: VIOLENCE AND WAR ARE ACTS OF WEAKNESS !! — ** WAR MAKES VICTIMS OF US ALL: THE DEATH OF ONE IS THE DIMINISHMENT OF ALL !! ** — each and every one of us is the “disguise” the devil wears !! —

“security” [of homeland] without addressing the root causes of the conflict, the terrorism, does NOT exist: the root cause being “corporate” [US/UK] foreign policy !! – ascribing evil to God [ie., group identity], and/or committing evil in the Name of God [ie., idol, systemic war; US/AMERICA AS INSTRUMENT OF GOD; PRESIDENT CHOSEN BY GOD] are monstrous SINS and CRIMES *AGAINST* GOD, a complete lack of knowledge about-and-of God(-ing) !!

Mammon or Messiah Book 1 Chapter 2 [web page](#) (widescreen)

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Mammon or Messiah Book 1 [blog home](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:20 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Linh Dinh: House Slave Syndrome

House Slave Syndrome

by Linh Dinh [article link](#)

August 6, 2010 | CommonDreams

A recent article declares, "Tired of war, thousands of Iraqis want to go to U.S." What it fails to mention is who triggered all the bloodshed. Who made conditions in Iraq so intolerable that these people must flee?

You know who. Over and over again, the U.S. has instigated mayhem or carnage overseas, generating thousands if not millions of refugees, many of whom longing to escape, paradoxically, it seems, to the source of their suffering. You beat and humiliate me, so can I move in?

But there is no paradox here, really. Let's call this phenomenon the House Slave Syndrome. With its vast military, petrodollar racket and control of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the U.S. dominates every single life on earth. It is a truly a full spectrum master. There is not a Panamanian, Nigerian, Georgian or Japanese, etc, whose life goes unmolested by American military or, more importantly, financial decisions. Each U.S. sneeze distorts the entire world. When its attention to your land includes a coup or a preemptive strike, then the plot just gets bloodier (and often oilier). No use hiding. Unless you're Bin Laden, Uncle Sam can always reach you!

The fact that many Iraqis want to come here means that our way of life is superior to theirs, many Americans will conclude, and what we're doing over there is entirely justified, if a bit costly on our end, but we're such good people, we give so much. Ignored is the fact that we've sold their oil and gas and kept 98% of the gross receipt. Our occupation is also not called We Will Bomb You, Strip You Naked and Smear Shit On Your Face, but Operation Iraqi Freedom. We're teaching them about civilization, even if they did start it five thousand years ago. A refresher course can't hurt. Between waterboarding lessons, we'll teach them about Angelina Jolie, and, for the more serious and advanced students, Megan Fox and Whoopie Goldberg. We'll throw in easy to understand parables about Jesus. Turn the other cheek, you Satanist Terrorists!

There is nothing new here. We've been messing with Iraq for half a century. In 1963, we orchestrated a coup there. We supported Saddam Hussein even before he became president. Before we turned against him, Saddam was our boy, just like Ngo Dinh Diem, Ferdinand Marcos, Mohammad Pahlavi, Manuel Noriega and so many others. It's good that Uncle Sam is not a baseball executive, because his picks are always terrible, but just ask yourself, What sort of character, for cash or career advancement, collaborates with the C.I.A.?

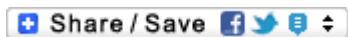
Washington ditches foreign dictators when they no longer serve its needs, but even the most loyal servants of our ruling class are just disposable tools, if not collateral damages. It has come out that General John D. Lavelle, who died in disgrace 30 years ago, was unjustly blamed for a military decision authorized by Richard Nixon. As his career was destroyed, both White House and Pentagon said nothing. Consider also what happened to Old Blood and Guts. Sixty-three years after the death of General Patton, evidences emerged that he was killed by the O.S.S., precursors to the C.I.A., in a staged car crash.

So even the highest ranked house slaves are not safe. Still, it's better to be inside than out. In fact, it's best to be as close to the man as possible. Here's a basic rule of survival: When shots ring out, run to the gang with the biggest guns, the one with the most tanks, planes and ships, and you'll less likely to become kabob. If they're smart bombing your neighborhood, you can save your own ass by moving into theirs, for even their least desirable real estate, even Detroit, for example, is safer than Baghdad, if not by much. In short, the closer you are to the baddest mofo, the less likely you are to be zapped by one of his drones or military contractors. If you sit next to the pilot, he'll have a harder time bombing your ass. Sniffing the man's deodorant, you will also have better access to his table scraps, preowned clothing and maybe even a bit of hand me down culture.

As long as we engage in wars on foreign soils, refugees will try to come here, but we simply can't stop because war is our primary industry, what we export to the rest of the world. War is our way of life. We are a war servicing nation. War nourishes our military industrial complex, cheers up stock holders of Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon and General Electrics, etc. Without wars, our stock market would disappear. College-aged children of the investment class may hold up cute signs protesting this or that conflict, but daddies and mommies need systematic and routine mass murders to maintain healthy stock portfolios.

Linh Dinh is the author of two books of stories and five of poems, with a novel, [Love Like Hate](#), scheduled for September. He's tracking our deteriorating socialscape through his frequently updated photo blog, [State of the Union](#).

CommonDreams [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:17 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, August 3, 2010

[Michael Albert: Why Participatory Economics?](#)

Why Participatory Economics?

By Michael Albert [article link](#)

July 2010 | Z Magazine

Markets subjugate ecology, abominate personality, breed poverty, and require gross inequality. War, what is it good for? Not people. Capitalism? It makes accumulation the goal of life and caring a token of failure. But, another world is possible nearly everyone replies. Really, what is it? We want the world and we want it now. Yes, but kind of world do you prefer?

Well, when I am asked that question about economics—and it is a good question about culture and kinship, and polity too—I answer, what I want is the fourth of four currently available options.

The first, capitalism, combines private ownership, remuneration for property, power, and, to a degree, output, corporate divisions of labor, and markets in ways primarily benefiting the capitalist class.

The second and the third, centrally planned and market (20th century) socialism combine markets or central planning with public or state ownership, remuneration for power, and, to a degree, for output, and corporate divisions of labor which primarily benefit a coordinator class of planners, managers, and others similarly empowered in the economy.

The fourth, participatory economics (parecon for short) combines social ownership, self-managing workers and consumers councils, remuneration for duration, intensity, and onerousness of work, balanced job complexes (that apportion labor so each job has roughly the same empowerment effects as all other jobs), and participatory planning where workers and consumers cooperatively negotiate economic outcomes with no class divisions.

I advocate participatory economics because it transcends capitalism and also market and centrally planned socialism by establishing core institutions that promote solidarity, equity of circumstance and income, diversity, participatory self management, classlessness, and efficiency in meeting human needs and developing human potentials. Here are more detailed reasons.

Reason 1: Parecon solves the problem of class

The usual approach to class has been that economic classes were a product of ownership relations. The main division was between capitalists owning the means of production and workers owning only their ability to do work. There were other classes such as peasants, but they were deemed less important. One could also distinguish between little or big owners, skilled or unskilled workers, and so on, but this was also secondary. The big issue was capital versus labor.

When some folks examined this time-honored left wisdom, we asked, what about managers, doctors, lawyers, engineers? Critics of the received left wisdom weren't satisfied with lumping these highly empowered workers in with either rote workers below or even more powerful owners above. We felt that the in-between group was different based on their economic position, yet not ownership.

What made a class, in this view, went beyond conditions of ownership to something more general—position in the economy—which gave classes interests collectively different and contrary to other classes, a different methodology for personal advancement, a different self image and image of others, and a potential to rule economic life.

Participatory economics extends the insights of anarchists like Bakunin and libertarian socialists like Barbara Ehrenreich that what was called socialism in the past had core institutions that didn't elevate workers while eliminating owners, but that elevated coordinators while eliminating owners. In the so-called socialist economies, we realized workers didn't decide economic outcomes and equitably share society's output. Instead, it was coordinators who dominantly decided economic outcomes and who aggrandized themselves from society's output.

So parecon's class insight was that beyond capitalism there is classlessness as one option, but there is also coordinatorism, as another option, where coordinatorism is an economic system that retains the class division between those who monopolize empowering circumstances in their work—the managers, lawyers, engineers, doctors, etc.—and those who mainly follow orders and suffer tedious conditions, the workers. In response, participatory economics, proposes a system that eliminates the familiar corporate divisions of labor through what it calls balanced job complexes. Each worker does a fair mix of tasks such that everyone's job is essentially equivalent in its total empowerment effects.

Participatory economics solves the class problem by (a) identifying the key classes; and (b) accomplishing economic functions without incurring class division and class rule. The features of Parecon that are most central to its solving the class problem are:

- * seeing that economies produce people and social relations, not simply outputs
- * understanding that not only ownership relations, but also the conditions under which people work and the things they do impact both their collective motives and their operational means
- * realizing that corporate divisions of labor and market allocation produce the coordinators as a separate and dominating class
- * committing to balanced job complexes and participatory planning in their place

Reason 2: Parecon solves the problem of economic self management

Many in my generation became radicalized in the mid-1960s. Controlling our own lives was a key theme of our new leftist commitments. It was quite natural, then, to like the idea of self management which came to mean that we each should have a say over decisions that affect us proportionate to the extent of their effect on us. Sometimes 50 percent rule was the best approximation to everyone having that level of influence. Other times consensus was the best way to achieve it. Sometimes requiring two-thirds for a decision was best or sometimes one person alone deciding, as in how to arrange his/her desk. Sometimes extensive discussion, debate, and refinement of proposals made sense. Other times, when less was at stake,

quicker procedures were better. It didn't take long to realize that if we should all have a say in decisions in proportion as they affect us—to the point where trying for further precision would cost us more in time and hassle than it would gain in desirable decision making and process—the implications for economics were pretty extreme.

An economy is a general system in which each part, including each choice, sets the context for all other parts and choices. If I consume a pencil, you can't consume that pencil. More, if we, together, in our society produce 100,000 pencils, we aren't producing whatever else we could have with the labor and resources that went to the pencils. Doing any one thing foregoes using the component energy, resources, and labor to do some other thing. But this means every decision affects every actor, albeit some actors far more than others. So for an economy to be self managing, workers must have a say in their workplaces about their activities as producers and consumers must have a say about what they get to eat or wear or ride, and also about what is available.

So in a participatory economy, workers councils and consumers councils use self-managed decision-making in their local deliberations and choices. But it is also necessary that the interface between workers in various plants, between consumers in one region and another, and between workers and consumers throughout the economy, is handled in a way that all participants have appropriate influence.

Suppose workers in a plant make their local decisions, but central planners tell them how much they must produce or markets impose output levels on them over which they have little say. Goodbye self management. Likewise, suppose consumers get to choose what they want from among society's outputs, looking at lists of availabilities and freely choosing among them, but what they choose from is determined without their having an impact. Or suppose those who breathe pollution don't have a say in car sales, or those who produce bicycles have no say in the availability of rubber or of safe biking conditions. Again, goodbye self management.

Participatory economics solves the self-management problem by understanding and highlighting accomplishing economic functions without giving any one set of participants more than proportionate say. The features of participatory economics most critical to its solution to the self-management problem are understanding that:

- * each person's freedom needs to extend to the point of others having similar freedom but should not extend further than that:
- * not only what we do day-to-day has to be self managed, but also the broad context in which we make those choices
- * familiar corporate divisions of labor and market allocation produce dominating elites with excessive say over outcomes
- * hierarchical decision-making destroys self management
- * self-managed councils, balanced job complexes, and participatory planning need to replace capitalist and coordinatorist options

Reason 3: Parecon promotes equity

Regarding equity, parecon examines remuneration and arrives at a particular norm—that we should each receive for our socially useful contributions to the economy a share of its outputs in proportion to the duration, intensity, and onerousness of our socially valued labor. We should get more income if we work at useful production longer, harder, or while enduring more onerous conditions, as should everyone else, and for no other reason.

Someone might think, instead, that it is equitable for Bill Gates to get income equal to that of whole populations of numerous countries by virtue of owning property. Or that it is equitable for Tiger Woods to get gargantuan income by virtue the value of his fantastic athletic talent to those who like to watch golf tournaments. Or that a thug with great bargaining power such as our corporate centers of industry deserve whatever income they can take. But parecon rejects remunerating property, or remunerating bargaining power, or even remunerating personal output. You get more simply for working longer, or harder, or at worse conditions, as long as you are producing valued output.

You can't work hard digging holes in your back yard and filling them and expect an income for it. Nor can you work hard at making something useful and desired, but doing the work in a slipshod or incompetent fashion that misuses inputs. In such cases, you are not creating socially desired outputs commensurate to the labor you are expending, which is to say not all the

time or effort you are expending is warranted by the desirability of its product and therefore not all of it deserves full remuneration. I can't be shortstop for the Yankees or quarterback for the Indianapolis Colts in a participatory economy because my efforts would not be appreciated, just as if I were digging holes and filling them.

Parecon's combination of methods and structures ensures that each actor who is able to work is afforded a share of the social product of his or her choosing in proportion to the duration, intensity, and onerousness of his or her socially valued work. Parecon is not manic to the tenth decimal place about this, of course. Rather, in different parecon workplaces, workers will adopt methods and norms of measuring that they prefer, always consistent, however, with the overarching guidelines. What parecon contributes regarding equity is, first, clarification as to its meaning and composition and, second, institutions that facilitate attaining it, which are, again, the participatory planning system, balanced job complexes, and self-managed councils.

Reason 4: Parecon can help overcome cynicism

There is no alternative," Margaret Thatcher intoned many years ago, offering the claim as a reason for accepting capitalism. For Thatcher, as well as for most people, leftist entreaties to activism sound like juvenile whining. They believe if it isn't one war it will be another. If that group over there isn't homeless or starving, some other group will be. Massive suffering is just the way of the world, so stop whining about it. Their belief in the necessity of the pains all around us ensures social passivity. A person might have great energy for their job or interpersonal relations, or some sport or hobby, but they do not have great energy for social change because social change seems to be a dead end.

To me, this cynicism is an obstacle so centrally important that overcoming it is a precondition for building large and sustained movements. If participatory economics is widely shared and clearly enunciated and if I am right about its merits, it can help people recognize that indeed there is a viable and worthy alternative to capitalism.

Reason 5: Parecon can inform current activist focus in ways essential to success

It is an old anarchist adage, and I think a very correct one, that we need to try to incorporate the seeds of the future in the present. Our movements, in their internal organizational structure, decision-making methods, modes of remuneration, divisions of labor, and relations to other efforts should try as much as possible to reflect the values we'd like in a future society both to learn and to inspire. As such, we should have movements that embody what we seek in race, gender relations, decision making, and class relations.

Parecon can inform how we construct and carry out our projects, organizations, and movements, helping us to incorporate councils, self-managed decision making, equitable remuneration, balanced job complexes, and relations among people that embody the features of participatory planning.

Many people, and ironically it is often precisely those who by their values most desire a self-managed economy, think there is a contradiction between seeking liberty and freedom and espousing an institutional vision. They think advocating specific institutions for a new society forces us into authoritarian, sectarian dynamics, leading to a world we would rather not inhabit.

I am confused by this objection to parecon and to vision more generally. It says that unless the future is brought into being without being thought about, discussed, debated, refined, and widely self consciously sought, it won't be participatory, classless, and self managing.

But how can a movement win a different future unless, at some point, it is seeking it? How can a movement be participatory and attain a self-managing economy and society, unless it is seeking such a society based on the insights of huge numbers of people? How can a huge number of people be seeking particular institutional changes unless they know what these new institutions look like, why they are valuable, and how they would work? And how can a large number of participants have such knowledge and the confidence to act, unless they have discussed and refined their aims? How can movement activists become advocates of a shared vision which, however, doesn't exist in the public imagination?

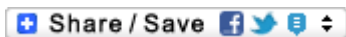
People's justified fears of sectarianism actually suggest that we should adopt vision flexibly, with an open mind, and welcoming criticism and debate, always ready to make changes. People with concerns about giving time to developing and advocating vision often say that what we want for our future should arise from our experiences. I agree. Of course, it should arise from our experiences. Indeed, where else has participatory economics or any other vision come from other than our assessments of our accumulated experiences over about 200 years of anti-capitalist activism plus a few decades of personal experiences and experiments?

Movements that don't have shared compelling vision will not have large and powerful memberships that can embody the seeds of the future in the present, orient their actions to desirable goals, and give participants an equal chance to make the aims of the movement their own, understand the aims, adapt the aims, act in light of the aims, correct, refine, or supersede the aims, and finally win them.

What our movement needs is shared classless and self-managing vision offered in the most accessible possible language, welcoming debate and refinement, able to inspire support and action. Yes, vision should be minimalist in the sense of not specifying circumstances that are for future participants to decide. But it should also be maximalist in seeking that which allows future people to self manage classlessly.

Michael Albert is co-founder of South End Press and Z Magazine. He is currently a staff member of ZNet and he is author of numerous books, including [*Realizing Hope*](#), [*Remembering Tomorrow*](#), and [*Parecon: Life After Capitalism*](#).

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Monday, August 2, 2010

[Barry Ferguson: The "I's" of the Illuminati](#)

The "I's" of the Illuminati
by Barry Ferguson [article link](#)
07.31.10 | Silver Bear Cafe

The Manifesto of the Illuminati

Do you know the 'golden rule'? It is, 'He that has the gold, makes the rules.' Once all of the gold is secured, all the rules can be set to ensure absolute power. To make it happen, a group effort would be needed to collect all the money. How would the group go about accumulating all the money and ultimately, all the gold? Where would they get the power to implement such a plan? If we are investing for our share of the money, we better get to know the competition. For purposes of simplicity, let's just call the group that is trying to monopolize the money, the 'illuminati'.

Let me start by defining 'illuminati'. The word is Latin and it basically means 'the enlightened ones'. Members of an illuminati believe themselves to be especially enlightened on certain subjects and are therefore superior in intellect to their peers. The term has been applied to 'shadow governments' and bankers who seek absolute control over wealth. Absolute power can be acquired by force or coercion. Force can breed resistance. Coercion can breed compliance. Mao Tse-Tung once said that 'political power grows out of the barrel of a gun'. Joseph Goebbels once said, 'If you tell a big enough lie, and keep repeating it, people begin believing it. The truth, therefore, becomes the enemy of the state.' So we have different strategies to obtain complete economic and political control. The illuminati is aggressively seeking that control today. The purpose of this article is not to argue the existence, but rather the means. Without doubt, governments and banks now dominate markets, economics, and politics more so than ever before. The question is, therefore, how do they maintain control and how should investors adjust?

So how does the illuminati exert their power? Vastly outnumbered, they would raise the ire of the population if they imposed their will with military force or any such overt efforts. Mao could be defeated in a military conflict. Jefferson could be defeated by a virulent plague of citizenry ignorance. But Goebbels might have been on to something. In truth, the illuminati's chief weapon is the ignorance of the population perpetuated by the false promise of security. The illuminati herd the populace in the desired direction with lies and material illusion. They divert attention from their ambitions by promising an improving stock market, arranging for easy loans for nice houses and shiny cars, and by manipulating the public psyche through trained speakers espousing the doctrine of government solution by 'spreading the wealth around'. They constantly monitor their subjects so as to maintain power. Their eyes, or 'I's', are always upon us. The following is their manifesto.

Invent

The first step to acquiring real power is to invent the medium of financial exchange. Precious metals actually work fine but they are finite and the supply cannot be controlled and monopolized. Money is the invention. Coins made of precious metals are fine but go back and read the previous sentence. Aaahh - paper money is best because it can be manufactured to infinity, it is cheap to print, and it shifts real power to the printer. Why? Because now, the 'value' of everything has a 'price' that is set from the paper printer. The paper money has to be confined to a single holder - the banks - to ensure it maintains an assigned and implied value. Then the banks can use 'fractional banking' that allows them to loan exponentially more money than they have on deposit. Finally the banks can use a new and wondrous invention - derivatives. The loans that they write become 'securitized' so they can be sold to other bankers and pseudo bankers who then derive an income stream from the interest coupons attached to the loans. Principal, and return thereof, is no longer important. The money has an implied worthlessness. As long as interest obligations are met, the derivatives resupply lent principal while they serve to petrify the debt and therefore become substitutes for currency. The magic of 'derivatives' is invented so that the banks can now issue paper whose value is tied to the value of another piece of paper. 'Capital' is simply created. It is 'invented'. And the best part of all is the derivative capital is cost-free and infinite in supply. The banks just have to convince the idiots of the world to accept their 'capital' as currency. Check.

Infiltrate

To coerce people to give up all of their money, the illuminati would have to infiltrate both society and the psyche of society. The psyche is the easy part. If a person has \$100 dollars and the bank loans them another \$100 dollars, the person 'feels' richer. Perhaps they can now buy a new TV or some other form of intellectual destruction like rap music. Everyone wants to 'feel' richer, right? Sure, the bank has the person fill out some official looking paperwork that engenders even more importance. In the end, the loan is made and the person thinks he is richer. The infiltration of society is a little tougher. The quickest way would be to use military force. But, as already discussed, this strategy would have some major negatives. No, the trick here is to disguise the true intent. To pull this off, society has to believe that lenders are benevolent. They also have to believe that their government is not only benevolent, but also competent. (Hey, quit laughing. I never said society was very smart!) For instance, as a reaction to the greatest financial debacle since the Great Depression, a push for financial 'reform' in the US was undertaken. The committee assigned to write the new legislation was spearheaded by Barney Frank and Chris Dodd. These men have been in charge of overseeing financial regulations for years. The failure of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac along with the explosion of derivative trading and the real estate bubble rests squarely at their feet. Allowing them to author more financial regulation is like hiring the Skipper and Gilligan for a three hour tour! Let me

amplify this with the FASB accounting rule known as Statement 159. I have included this in past lectures that I have done but basically the rule allows banks to play 'heads I win, tails you lose'. When bonds issued by banks fall in value, the bank books the loss as profit. Incredibly, the loss becomes income. In the first quarter of 2010, the four largest US banks reported a combined \$13 billion in income by using Statement 159. That alone accounts for 20% of their supposed 'profits'. When did it become apparent to all of society that banks were broke? 2007. When did Statement 159 become rule? 2007. Check.

Illiterate

It takes time. If a group wants absolute control, it must dumb down the population. Education must be stifled. History must be re-written and sanitized. The US now has a 69% on-time high school graduation rate. Only a quarter or so of the population has a college degree. Television is dumbed down to a bunch of reality shows portraying the lives of idiots that are supposed to amuse us. And, that's only C-SPAN. The media has become so fecklessly inept, that the best financial/economic writer around right now is Matt Taibbi of the music magazine, Rolling Stone. Political leaders are clueless as they continue to show an unfathomable lack of understanding about debt and its destructive powers. The new currency of banks is derivatives and how many people want to hear about those things? Political leaders run all over the world spewing misstatements and false information. The Federal Reserve constantly issues mendacious statements calculated to further their conquest. Three times in 2006 and 2007, Mr. Bernanke stated that an inverted yield curve was not a precursor to recession and in fact, the economy was strong. Yet, no one challenged those assertions even though statistics and charts clearly say the opposite. Need I say more? Ignorance surrenders power. Check.

Intoxicate

Helmand Province in Afghanistan is where 90% of the world's heroin comes from. That's why the latest military 'surge' was focused in that region. Control the drugs and one controls the intoxicants. Acquiring real power is about eliminating competition. Let's use a time line here. Since the Federal Reserve came to power in 1913, we have endured WW I, WW II, the Korean War, Viet Nam, and the Gulf war. Now our military forces are dispatched to Iraq and Afghanistan. When the military lease on Okinawa was terminating, a South Korean submarine was supposedly sank by a North Korean torpedo. The lease was immediately renewed and a bank loan was no doubt extended. Why is this sequence important? Wars produce debt and banks provide the supply. Wars also produce horrific casualties and Vietnam was probably all society could take. Since then, casualties have been greatly reduced. There is nothing like a steady stream of body bags to raise suspicion that something else is driving the process. When did the era of drugs explode? Yep, right when Vietnam became a quagmire. If societal control cannot be exercised through war, drugs can be used. Society has to be either eliminated or stoned and drunk. Otherwise, they might rise from their coma and rebel against absolute control. The illuminate does not want society to get wise to their impending despotic ruin. At the very least, the intoxicated part of society gets eliminated from threat of power competition. Check.

Incarcerate

Society is better controlled behind bars. Intoxification has to be criminalized. Drugs are illegal. If a large segment of society is imprisoned, there is less of a threat to the power. This may be depressing, but we must understand the facts. For the first time in the history, in 1995 the US started spending more on building prisons than on building colleges. In 1999, The US spent \$41 billion on incarceration and \$16 billion on welfare. In 2008, there were 2.3 million inmates in US prisons. 3.2% of the population is either in jail, on probation, or on parole. In 2008, states spent \$50 billion on the prison system and the federal government spent \$5 billion. As of 2006, states were spending 7% of their budgets on prisons. In spite of what government liars (yes, that's an oxymoron) say about inflation, health care costs for inmates is growing by 10% per year. Why has incarceration become a bigger portion of the plan? Violent crime in the US has been relatively stable since 1980. But since drug laws changed, drug convictions have risen 12 fold. The US leads the world in percent of the population incarcerated. China is second. Those incarcerated have taken the place of the body bags. Soon, we will have new laws like the health care tax that will allow for even more non-compliant citizens to be put away. Tommy Chong was jailed for water pipe (drug paraphernalia) sales across the state line of Pennsylvania (I believe). When asked what it was like to go to jail, he replied, "You'll find out." War is ugly. Check.

Institutionalize

Government control is institutionalization. When the government imposes absolute power over society, no one questions the government's mandates for fear of penalty. Freedom's have to be curtailed. Events can be orchestrated to affect surrender. The Patriot Act is an example of the surrender of liberties. Catastrophic events can lead to more reliance on the all-powerful government. These events work in favor of the illuminati to exercise more control. The goal is to get everyone thinking alike. That makes herd control much easier. Control education. Control the media. Control behavior. Control thought. Check.

Impoverish

Poor education and bouts of incarceration lead to impoverishment. Give them a big TV and sporty car to drive, and the impoverished won't rebel against the power. Real pay in the US is declining and the price of education is escalating. 40 million Americans rely on the government for food assistance via food stamps. The 'food stamps' are actually debit cards issued by JP Morgan bank. Human suffering profits the banks. Current unemployment is double digits and home foreclosures are still setting records. It is estimated that one million homes will be foreclosed in the US in 2010. There are another 5 million that are considered 'seriously delinquent. Poor people fight for crumbs. Check.

Immigrate

Unfettered immigration dilutes the culture and creates a need for government assistance. Government assistance is administered at a great cost. Liberty. Check.

Indebt

Those who avoid any of the above, will surely fall victim to indebtedness. From the institutionalized lie that we could all live better if we just had access to more credit, our society has become more indebted than ever before. Citizens and sovereign nations alike have spent more than they can ever repay. Who supplied the credit? The banks. Where did they get the money? They invented it. How did they talk us into accepting the debt? They made it sound like there was no risk. Why was there no risk? Because derivatives were invented to diminish credit risks. Infinite debt can no longer 'break the bank'. As long as the interest coupon on the debt can be paid each month, the derivative world can keep the debt afloat. Hopeless indebtedness results in a transfer of assets from the indebted to the lender. The lender maintains full power over the indebted. The US is now more than \$13.2 trillion in debt. Check.

Enslave

Once society is completely and hopelessly indebted, it is therefore enslaved. Once society gets to this point, no one will know, or care, whether 'enslave' starts with an 'I' or an 'E'. When the nefarious emperor cracks the whip, society complies. Slaves have nowhere to run and no weapons with which to fight. Their intellect has been stolen and their leaders have defected. When the US economy faced a financial 'catastrophe' (only the banks were broke - not corporate America), Congress surrendered the Treasury (the gold) to the banks. No bullets were needed. Pelosi and her minions embraced the lie. Mao lost. Goebbels won. Check.

Welcome to the new order of the 'illuminati'. The enlightened ones now exert more and more power in their efforts to control the world. Money is power and infinite money is infinite power. It is only possible through derivatives. One can debate the existence of a physical illuminati body. One cannot debate the footprints of such intent. We are gradually moving towards one government and one bank. There is a strategy in place. Sadly, I don't believe there is enough Jeffersonian intellect nor enough Jacksonian courage to repel the forces intent on driving us into the abyss.

Now what do we do to invest our money? We know that total power resides in the hands of central bankers. That power will not be challenged because a large part of the population is too ignorant to understand who is holding their leash and rest of the population is enslaved by their debt enabling investments. Those investments are totally controlled by the central banks in what used to be called a 'stock market'. Let's just be honest and call it what it is - a 'casino'. With no Fed to goose

indexes higher, where might they go? What supposed investing 'skills' do most people really have? To understand what to expect in the future, let's look at the past few months.

The Dow rolled over in late April and experienced a 10-minute 'flash crash' of 1,000 points on May 6, 2010. I say the ECB liquidated stocks to prepare a Euro-bank bailout but truth is the enemy of the state. Anyway, as always, the central banks responded with the ECB announcing a trillion dollar bailout of the Euro-banks. The Dow immediately rallied back up some 800 points. Bear in mind, this was in response to the paltry \$30 billion that Greece could not repay. Given the reality of a bankrupt world, the Dow made a lower high, then gave up the gains and made a new low in the now evident down-trend (lower highs, lower lows). To arrest this decline (and pretend that all was well), the Plunge Protection Team (PPT) orchestrated a 125-point rally in the final 30 minutes of trading on May 21. Two days later, the Dow made a new low and was off 250 points before the PPT brought it back at the end of the day once again. The Treasury auctioned another \$110 billion in debt (as if it matters anymore). June opened with the Dow losing another 400 points (a lower low) until the ECB said they would in fact start buying Euro-bank debt for the first time ever. The Treasury auctioned another \$70 billion in debt and the Dow rallied 500 points over the course of a few weeks. But, reality is a bear and the Dow rolled back over (after making a lower high) going down into July. The Dow made yet a new lower low on July 2. After the July 4 holiday, the Dow opened on July 5 and went down 150 points only to recover it all plus some including 60 points in the last ten minutes. Presto! Another rally was on! To emphasize the rally, on July 8, the PPT tacked on 80 points to the Dow in the final hour of trading. 25% of the total intraday volume came in that final hour. Obviously a rally ensued and so on. When it looked doomed for failure, the PPT jolted the Dow up some 100 points in the final hour of trading on July 15. Will it hold? The last lower high for the Dow was about 10,500. The PPT needs a close above that mark to end the down-trend. We shall see. In the modern stock casino, every turn in trend is a 'V' and not a 'U'. The abruptness of intervention and manipulation is what we must now embrace.

The point is this. The casino is now controlled by the central bankers who only act when the casino lights begin to flicker. They jolt the indices with buy programs and instigate rallies. Why? The casino is the ultimate illusion. As long as the casino keeps the light on, the part of society that is not yet institutionalized thinks they have a chance to make the slot machine pay off. Occasionally, the perpetrators allow three oranges to appear. They have to. Otherwise, we would all go away and they couldn't even afford to keep the casino operating. We either believe the illusion or not. If so, we keep playing. If not, the PPT 'creates' a winner replete with buzzers and whistles and pontificators and prevaricators blaring the virtues of investing right down our greedy little ear canals. If we plan to keep any of our gold, we must understand the rules of the war. Investing has changed so that we must now be in sync with the manipulators that have all the power. We must be in and out with skilful deftness. Or, we can choose to remain seated while the manipulators draw three oranges on the board. Forget fundamentals. They are meaningless. Besides, they are all made up and manipulated. Every casino rally now comes from a central bank action. Every action comes at a casino dip. If you think you are investing for the long run, remember this. Once the illuminati captures all the gold, they will no longer need to keep the casino open. Checkmate. Enslavement is a lie. Truth cannot be enslaved. Pass it on.

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Andrew J. Bacevich: How to Dismantle the American Empire Before This Country Goes Under

How to Dismantle the American Empire Before This Country Goes Under

By Andrew J. Bacevich [article link](#)

July 29, 2010 | Metropolitan Books | AlterNet

Editor's note: The following is excerpted from [WASHINGTON RULES: America's Path To Permanent War](#) by Andrew J. Bacevich, published this month by Metropolitan Books, an imprint of Henry Holt and Company, LLC. Copyright (c) 2010 by Andrew J. Bacevich. All rights reserved. With permission of Henry Holt and Company.

The world -- we are incessantly told -- is becoming ever smaller, more complex, and more dangerous. Therefore, it becomes necessary for the nation to intensify the efforts undertaken to "keep America safe," while also, of course, advancing the cause of world peace. Achieving these aims -- it is said -- requires the United States to funnel ever greater sums of money to the Pentagon to develop new means of projecting power, and to hold itself in readiness for new expeditions deemed essential to pacify (or liberate) some dark and troubled quarter of the globe.

At one level, we can with little difficulty calculate the cost of these efforts: The untold billions of dollars added annually to the national debt and the mounting toll of dead and wounded U.S. troops provide one gauge.

At a deeper level, the costs of adhering to the Washington consensus defy measurement: families shattered by loss; veterans bearing the physical or psychological scars of combat; the perpetuation of ponderous bureaucracies subsisting in a climate of secrecy, dissembling, and outright deception; the distortion of national priorities as the military-industrial complex siphons off scarce resources; environmental devastation produced as a by-product of war and the preparation for war; the evisceration of civic culture that results when a small praetorian guard shoulders the burden of waging perpetual war, while the great majority of citizens purport to revere its members, even as they ignore or profit from their service.

No doubt the case can, and probably will, be made that the obligations of global leadership demand that the United States take on the problems besetting Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia, much as it has addressed those besetting Afghanistan and Iraq.

Little evidence exists to suggest that such efforts are likely to have a positive effect, however. No evidence exists -- none -- to suggest that U.S. efforts will advance the cause of global peace. If, as many suspect, Washington's actual aim is something more akin to dominance or hegemony, then evidence exists in abundance demonstrating that the project is a self-defeating one.

Critics of U.S. foreign policy questioned the wisdom and feasibility of forcibly attempting to remake the world in America's image. They believed that even to make the attempt was to court corruption in the form of imperialism and militarism, thereby compromising republican institutions at home. Representing no one party but instead a great diversity of perspectives, they insisted that, if America has a mission, that mission is to model freedom rather than to impose it.

The famed diplomat-turned-historian George Kennan, a cultural conservative, was one such critic. Senator J. William Fulbright, a died-in-wool liberal internationalist, was another. The influential social critic Christopher Lasch, a self-professed radical, was a third. Martin Luther King, arguably the dominant moral figure of the American Century, was a fourth.

Writing to an acquaintance in the midst of the Korean War, Kennan argued that Americans had for too long subjected their garden to abuse. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that our country bristles with imperfections -- and some of them very serious ones -- of which we are almost universally aware, but lack the resolution and civic vigor to correct." Here lay the real danger. "What is at stake here is our duty to ourselves and our own national ideals." In a contemporaneous lecture, Kennan returned to this theme. To observers abroad, he suggested, the sight of an America in which there is visible no higher social goal than the self-enrichment of the individual, and where that self-enrichment takes place primarily in material goods and gadgets that are of doubtful utility in the achievement of the deeper satisfactions of life -- this sight fails to inspire either confidence or enthusiasm.

Rather than obsessing about the threat posed by the Soviet Union, the nation needed to set its own house in order. By demonstrating a capacity to nurture “a genuinely healthy relationship both of man to nature and of man to himself,” Kennan believed, Americans might “then, for the first time, have something to say to people elsewhere,” perhaps even becoming “a source of inspiration” to others.

A decade after Kennan, in the midst of another dubious war, Senator Fulbright assessed the implications of believing that America’s own well-being required constant meddling abroad. It was, he wrote, “neither the duty nor the right of the United States to sort out” all of the world’s WASHINGTON RULES problems. “[M]any things happen in many places,” wrote the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, “that are either none of our business or in any case are beyond the range of our power, resources, and wisdom.” It was long past time for the United States to “confine herself to doing only that good in the world which she can do, both by direct effort and by the force of her example,” abandoning her “missionary idea full of pretensions about being the world’s policeman.”

Lasch, who spent decades ruthlessly dissecting American culture, concurred. “The real promise of American life,” he insisted, was to be found in “the hope that a self-governing republic can serve as a source of moral and political inspiration to the rest of the world, not as the center of a new world empire.”

Martin Luther King went even further. In the spring of 1967, preaching on the raging Vietnam War, he insisted that the time had come “for all people of conscience to call upon America to come back home.” Before attempting to save others, the nation needed to acknowledge and correct its own sins and failings.

To none of these men did coming home imply passivity or so-called isolationism. It did, however, mean revising the hierarchy of national priorities. In that regard, the militarization of U.S. policy, exemplified above all by the Vietnam War, had diverted the nation’s attention from pursuing its true calling. The arduous work of creating a free society remained far from finished. Only by turning away from war would the United States be able to tackle what King referred to as the “giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism.”

The essential credo to which each of these figures subscribed, a variant of the convictions first articulated by the Cultivating Our Own Garden Founders, deserves renewed consideration today. Its essence is simply this: *America’s purpose is to be America, striving to fulfill the aspirations expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as reinterpreted with the passage of time and in light of hard-earned experience.*

The proper aim of American statecraft, therefore, is not to redeem humankind or to prescribe some specific world order, nor to police the planet by force of arms. Its purpose is to permit Americans to avail themselves of the right of self-determination as they seek to create at home a “more perfect union.” Any policy impeding that enterprise -- as open-ended war surely does -- is misguided and pernicious.

By demonstrating the feasibility of creating a way of life based on humane, liberal values, the United States might help illuminate the path ahead for others who seek freedom. Or as Randolph Bourne once put it, “a turning within” is essential “in order that we may have something to give without.” Yet this “giving without” qualifies as an extra benefit -- a bonus or dividend -- not as the central purpose of American life.

In short, if the United States has a saving mission, it is, first and foremost, to save itself. In that regard, Dr. King’s list of evils may need a bit of tweaking. In our own day, the sins requiring expiation number more than three. Yet in his insistence that we first heal ourselves -- “Come home, America!” -- King remains today the prophet Americans would do well to heed.

A New Trinity

Here, too, there exists an alternative tradition to which Americans today could repair, should they choose to do so. This tradition harks back to the nearly forgotten anti-imperial origins of the Republic. Succinctly captured in the motto “Don’t Tread on Me,” this tradition is one that does not seek trouble but insists that others will accord the United States respect. Updated for our own time, it might translate into the following substitute for the existing sacred trinity.

First, the purpose of the U.S. military is not to combat evil or remake the world, but to defend the United States and its most vital interests. However necessary, military power itself is neither good nor inherently desirable. Any nation defining itself in terms of military might is well down the road to perdition, as earlier generations of Americans instinctively understood. As for military supremacy, the lessons of the past are quite clear. It is an illusion and its pursuit an invitation to mischief, if not disaster. Therefore, the United States should maintain only those forces required to accomplish the defense establishment's core mission.

Second, the primary duty station of the American soldier is in America. Just as the U.S. military should not be a global police force, so too it should not be a global occupation force. Specific circumstances may from time to time require the United States on a temporary basis to establish a military presence abroad. Yet rather than defining the norm, Americans should view this prospect as a sharp departure, entailing public debate and prior congressional authorization. Dismantling the Pentagon's sprawling network of existing bases promises to be a lengthy process. Priority should be given to those regions where the American presence costs the most while accomplishing the least. According to those criteria, U.S. troops should withdraw from the Persian Gulf and Central Asia forthwith.

Third, consistent with the Just War tradition, the United States should employ force only as a last resort and only in self-defense. The Bush Doctrine of preventive war -- the United States bestowing on itself the exclusive prerogative of employing force against ostensible threats even before they materialize—is a moral and strategic abomination, the very inverse of prudent and enlightened statecraft. Concocted by George W. Bush to justify his needless and misguided 2003 invasion of Iraq, this doctrine still awaits explicit abrogation by authorities in Washington. Never again should the United States undertake “a war of choice” informed by fantasies that violence provides a shortcut to resolving history's complexities.

Were this alternative triad to become the basis for policy, dramatic changes in the U.S. national security posture would ensue. Military spending would decrease appreciably. The Pentagon's global footprint would shrink. Weapons manufacturers would see their profits plummet. Beltway Bandits would close up shop. The ranks of defense-oriented think tanks would thin. These changes, in turn, would narrow the range of options available for employing force, obliging policy makers to exhibit greater restraint in intervening abroad. With resources currently devoted to rehabilitating Baghdad or Kabul freed up, the cause of rehabilitating Cleveland and Detroit might finally attract a following.

Choosing

President Lyndon Johnson had hoped that an ambitious domestic reform program known as the Great Society might define his legacy. Instead, he bequeathed to his successor a nation that was bitterly divided, deeply troubled, and increasingly cynical.

To follow a different course would have required Johnson to depart from the Washington rules. This he -- although not he alone -- lacked the courage to do.

Here lies the real significance -- and perhaps the tragedy -- of Barack Obama's decision, during the first year of his presidency, to escalate the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan. By retaining Robert Gates as defense secretary and by appointing retired four-star officers as his national security adviser and intelligence director, Obama had already offered Washington assurances that he was not contemplating a radical departure from the existing pattern of national security policy. Whether wittingly or not, the president now proffered his full-fledged allegiance to the Washington consensus, removing any lingering doubts about its durability.

In his speech of December 1, 2009, while explaining to the cadets at West Point why he felt it necessary to widen a war already in its ninth year, Obama justified his decision by appending it to a much larger narrative. “More than any other nation,” he declared, “the United States of America has underwritten global security for over six decades -- a time that, for all its problems, has seen walls come down, and markets open, and billions lifted from poverty, unparalleled scientific progress and advancing frontiers of human liberty.” Obama wanted it known that by sending tens of thousands of additional U.S. troops to fight in Afghanistan his own administration was carrying on the work his predecessors had begun. Their policies were his policies.

The six decades to which the president referred in his artfully sanitized rendering of contemporary history were the years during which the American credo and the sacred trinity had ascended to a position of uncontested supremacy. Thus did the president who came into office vowing to change the way Washington works make known his intention to leave this crucially important element of his inheritance all but untouched. Like Johnson, the president whose bold agenda for domestic reform presaged his own, Obama too was choosing to conform.

Still, we should be grateful to him for making at least one thing unmistakably clear: To imagine that Washington will ever tolerate second thoughts about the Washington rules is to engage in willful self-deception. Washington itself has too much to lose.

If change is to come, it must come from the people. Yet unless Americans finally awaken to the fact that they've been had, Washington will continue to have its way.

So the need for education -- summoning Americans to take on the responsibilities of an active and engaged citizenship -- has become especially acute. For me personally, education became possible twenty years ago at the Brandenburg Gate when I contemplated the disparity between what I had been conditioned to believe and what I was actually witnessing. The dissonance was too great to ignore. The ensuing process of confronting illusions (including my own) and of dissecting the contradictions besetting U.S. policy was sometimes painful and never easy. Yet it included moments of considerable exhilaration and its overall effect has been liberating. Self-awareness is a great gift. The ability to see things as they are, without blinders, is an even greater one.

Americans today must reckon with a contradiction of gaping proportions. Promising prosperity and peace, the Washington rules are propelling the United States toward insolvency and perpetual war. Over the horizon a shipwreck of epic proportions awaits. To acknowledge the danger we face is to make learning -- and perhaps even a course change -- possible. To willfully ignore the danger is to become complicit in the destruction of what most Americans profess to hold dear. We, too, must choose.

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Sunday, August 1, 2010

Ralph Nader: Out of Afghanistan

Out of Afghanistan

by Ralph Nader [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 31, 2010 | Ralph Nader | CommonDreams

The war in Afghanistan is nearly nine years old—the longest in American history. After the U.S. quickly toppled the Taliban regime in October 2001, the Taliban, by all accounts, came back stronger and harsher enough to control now at least 30 percent of the country. During this time, U.S. casualties, armaments and expenditures are at record levels.

America's overseas wars have different outcomes when they have no constitutional authority, no war tax, no draft, no regular on the ground press coverage, no Congressional oversight, no spending accountability and, importantly, no affirmative consent of the governed who are, apart from the military families, hardly noticing.

This is an asymmetrical, multi-matrix war. It is a war defined by complex intrigue, shifting alliances, mutating motivations, chronic bribery, remotely-generated civilian deaths, insuperable barriers of language and ethnic and subtribal conflicts. It is fought by warlords, militias, criminal gangs, and special forces discretionary death squads. Millions of civilians are impoverished, terrified and live with violent disruptions. There is no central government to speak of. The White House uses illusions of strategies and tactics to bid for time. In Afghanistan, the historic graveyard of invaders, hope springs infernal.

Neatly dressed Generals—who probably would never have gotten into this mess if they, not the civilian neocon, draft dodgers in the Bush regime, had made the call—regularly trudge up to Congress to testify. There they caveat their status reports, keeping expectations alive, while cowardly politicians praise their bravery. General David Petraeus could receive the Academy Award in Hollywood next year, as long as he doesn't say what he really thinks, obedient soldier that he is. Listen to General Stanley A. McChrystal, not known for his squeamishness. Speaking of civilian deaths and injured at military checkpoints, he said: "We have shot an amazing number of people, but to my knowledge, none have ever proven to be a threat."

On the ground are 100,000 U.S. soldiers with another 100,000 corporate contractors. The human and economic costs are huge. According to the CIA, James Jones—Obama's national security adviser—and other officials, there are only 50 to 100 Al Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan and 300 to 400 members of the group in Pakistan. The rest have scattered to other nations or just melded back into the population. Affiliates of Al Qaeda have emerged in the southern Arabian peninsula, Somalia, North Africa, Indonesia and other locales. There is something awry about this asymmetry.

The Taliban number no more the 30,000 irregular fighters of decidedly mixed motivations entirely focused over there, not toward the U.S. mainland. President Obama describes the Taliban as "a blend of hard-core ideologues, tribal leaders, kids that basically sign up because it's the best job available to them. Not all of them are going to be thinking the same way about the Afghan government, about the future of Afghanistan. And so we're going to have to sort through how these talks take place."

Helping Obama "sort through" are drones blowing up civilian gatherings—by mistake of course—to destroy suspected militants often casually chosen by other natives because of grudges or the transfer of money. Helicopter gunships and fighter planes spread havoc and terror through the populace. "Special forces" go deeper into Pakistan with their secret missions of mayhem. Local resentment and anger continues to boomerang against the U.S. occupiers.

U.S. Army truckloads of hundred dollar bills are paying off various personages of uncertain reliability. At the same time, Obama's representatives regularly accuse President Karzai of rampant corruption. In between, civilian Americans and USAID try to dig wells and construct clinics and schools that might not be there very long in the anarchic, violent, nightfall world of the Afghan tribal areas.

More military force is expected to clear the way for the assumption of Afghan-run duties and security in 2014 by a central government that is neither central, nor governmental. The locals loath the government's attempt to collect taxes, and continue to survive by growing poppies (opium).

In early 2001, George W. Bush awarded the Taliban \$40 million for stamping out the poppy trade; now Afghanistan is the number one narco grower in the world. U.S. soldiers walk right past the poppy fields so as not to turn the locals against them.

U.S. dollars pay warlords and the Taliban in order for them not to blow up U.S. convoys going through mountain passes, some carrying fuel that costs taxpayers \$400 per delivered gallon. The Taliban receive half the electricity from a U.S. built power plant and collect the monthly electric bills in their controlled areas. The more electricity, the more money for the Taliban to fight the American and British soldiers.

Last year, over three billion dollars in cash moved *out* of Kabul's airport unaccounted for, while billions of US dollars flow *into* Kabul for undocumented purposes.

Despite fighting against "insurgents" possessing rifles, propelled grenades and suicide vests, the Obama administration—with an arsenal of massive super-modern weaponry at hand—keeps saying there is no military solution and that only a political settlement will end the conflict.

Tell that to the Afghan people, who suffer from brutal sectarian struggles fueled by American and coalition occupiers and invaders. To them, there's a disconnect between what Obama does and what he says he wants.

Meanwhile, the war spills ever more into Pakistan and its turbulent politics generates more hatred against Americans. These people had nothing to do with 9/11 so why, they ask, are the Americans blowing up their neighborhood?

President Obama says the soldiers should start coming home in July 2011, depending on conditions on the ground. He wants the Taliban commanders, whom he is destroying one by one, to agree to negotiations with Kabul that requires their subservience. His formula is peace through more war. But the Taliban are not known to surrender. They know the terrain where they live and they believe they can wear Obama down, notwithstanding U.S. special forces and drones expected to stay there for years.

Congress—an inkblot so far—needs to assert its constitutional authority over budgets and policy toward the war. Members are regular rubber-stamps of White House recklessness under Bush and Obama.

Furthermore, nothing will happen without a few million Americans back home stomping, marching and bellowing to end the boomeranging, costly invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and concentrate on America's needs at home.

Ralph Nader is a consumer advocate, lawyer, and author. His most recent book - and first novel - is, [Only The Super-Rich Can Save Us](#). His most recent work of non-fiction is [The Seventeen Traditions](#).

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Szandor Blestman: Old New World Order Goal, World Empire

Old New World Order Goal, World Empire

by Szandor Blestman [article link](#) [article link](#)

31 July 2010 | Szandor Blestman | Silver Bear Cafe

The New World Order is not new. It is actually controlled by very old, very wealthy families. It is likely at least partially the brainchild of European royalty that should have faded into the sunset a long time ago, along with their central banking agents. Somehow, these royal families have managed to keep their wealth and their political influence in spite of decades, even centuries, of various political movements that should have cast them down and made them pariahs of the human race. Somehow they have managed to escape the wrath of the common folk in spite of wars and revolutions that should have targeted them and their agents.

Through all this they have not changed their ways. Through all this they have maintained their world view. Through all this they have remained arrogant, uncaring and aloof with an uncanny and almost inhuman lack of empathy and emotion. Throughout history they have kept their eyes on their ultimate goal and nurtured their belief that they are divinely chosen to rule over man rather than passively allowed to do so by the masses. It makes one almost feel sorry for them that they can be so deluded.

The dream of world dominance has infected the minds of the ruling class for centuries, if not millennia. One might wonder if this in and of itself has caused some kind of permanent damage to the intelligence and the psyches of those who have descended from the genetics of the elite. One might believe that world domination is a normal objective for all human beings if one considers how often one might hear the phrase "If I ran the world...", but these childlike musings soon give way to reality and most of us are likely to be satisfied with just running our own lives as best we can. Most of us likely just want to become the best humans we can possibly become. Many times this means just leaving others to their own means and letting them make their own mistakes. This is a lesson the ruling class just seems unable to learn. Indeed, this is the same mistake they've made throughout the ages, that they feel they are better able to run the lives of others and they have the right to force others, by whatever means possible, to bow to their will and accept their laws. They are apparently more concerned with growing their wealth and influence rather than becoming better human beings.

These people would like to remain in the shadows. They would like to stay hidden. I think this is because they know what they're doing is wrong. Somewhere, deep in their subconscious, despite their own thinking that they're being benevolent, they know their behavior is not right. Otherwise, they'd conduct their activities with honesty and in the open, even flaunt them and publicize them for all to see. Instead they sneak around, deceive and even deny when confronted. When they do admit to their nefarious deeds, they do so in such a way as to keep the masses mostly in the dark and leave it to the few who really pay attention to dig up the dirt on them.

The key to their scheme seems to be centralization. The ruling class would have us believe that one world government is the answer to the modern problems mankind faces. They would like us to believe that a one world government would put an end to war, poverty, homelessness, starvation, all kinds of maladies, even natural and manmade disasters. They would like us to believe these things because they would like us to support their centralization efforts. They would like there to be a populist movement to create the one world government so that it looks like it isn't their idea. What they don't want us to figure out is that a one world government would not be safeguarding the rights of the individual. It would not even really be democratic or even a representative democracy. It would be a collectivist scheme establishing a corporate aristocracy or some other kind of authoritarian hierarchy meant to control the entire world. Such a system could very well become the worst tyranny this world has ever seen.

These are people who believe not only that they should run everything, but that they own everything. This includes you. They seem to believe that you exist for the sole purpose of serving them. The only thing a one world government would do is put another layer of bureaucracy atop already overly bloated systems. It would simply add more taxes to already overly burdened populations. They evidently feel they own that portion of your labor. They feel they have the right to steal your money to fund their projects. They want you to believe they have your best interests in mind, that they are providing you

with the society in which you operate, but in practice reality is quite a bit different than the utopia these control freaks believe they can build.

These people only manage to take opportunity away from you. They take your money and make laws in order to try to legitimize a worldwide system which benefits mostly the interests of their selves, their friends and their families. They wish to keep competition to a minimum and force government sanctioned monopolies upon us to maximize their profits while minimizing the quality of goods and services provided. They are trying to build an infrastructure based on spying and fear that will prevent people from interacting with each other in manners that threaten their power base.

There are dangerous times ahead. With the existing financial crises and looming disasters, it will be tempting to accept solutions to problems presented to us by those who care nothing for the betterment of humanity and everything for their own personal aggrandizement. We should all be very suspicious of globalization in whatever iteration, whatever the excuse. We should all remain quite cautious when our national governments wish to merge or cooperate with multi national and worldwide organizations. Only those at the top of the heap benefit from such maneuvers and they never take care of the problems they claim they will fix. Indeed, it seems more often than not those same problems become exacerbated. We will do well to remember history, question authority and remain diligent in demanding respect for individual rights.

The world elite have never been closer to realizing their goal. Yet even as they can see the brass ring within their grasp, their chances to grab it are slipping away. The European Union is in trouble. There is dissent amongst its members. The proposed Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America has been exposed as the fraudulent control scheme that it is. Even the separate states in the United States of America have begun to exercise more of their autonomy and are challenging the rule of their centralized federal government. The problems that have been created by greater centralization cannot be solved by more of the same. Collectivism in all its forms will always fail, for it attempts to hold down the human spirit.

A few hundred years ago, people started fleeing from Europe to try to escape the tyranny of monarchs and find independence amongst like minded people in a new world. Those people quickly learned they could prosper very well without the burdens of a huge centralized government. They came to understand, in fact, that they were better off taking care of themselves and their own. They quickly built a nation predicated on the ideas of liberty and the rights of the individual. This nation quickly became perhaps the most prosperous nation to ever exist. People flocked to its shores simply because they wanted the opportunity to become the best they could. The power elite, seeing that they were losing their serfs, likely felt threatened and began making plans to bring back those they had lost into the fold. They could ill afford to let these ideas of freedom and self determination infect the commoners, for then they might become less significant to the rest of humanity.

One would have thought that creating such a nation would eventually lead to smaller and smaller government. One would have thought that government would have become less burdensome and more localized as prosperity grew. But somewhere along the line the nation took a wrong turn. Somehow government continued to grow and become more burdensome as it restricted the people from conducting their lives as they would see fit. Somehow it came to be that the populous began to expect government to mother, coddle and protect them, and so they sacrificed their personal liberties in the hopes of obtaining some measure of security to be provided by others. Once the formally freest nation in the world has become completely corrupted and socialized, the beacon of freedom is turned off, and the rest of the world falls in line.

We can ill afford to remain blissfully ignorant anymore. Whether you believe there is a new world order or not, it is painfully obvious that there is a power elite moving to create a global paradigm restricting personal freedom and competition. This attempt at big world government should be resisted in whatever peaceful manner is necessary, be it through exposing them, civil disobedience, refusing to go along with their mandates, or even through the systems they have set up. Simply stop supporting their efforts and they will fail.

They will continue to try to lie, deceive, misinform, bribe and even create problems so that they can offer solutions. It is time the human race recognized their corrupt nature and the reality of what they are trying to accomplish. It is time for us to stop being fooled by their propaganda and to start decentralizing and localizing power. It is time to once again respect the rights of the smallest minority, the individual. In that way, we can evolve into the human beings we were meant to be.

Please remember to visit szandorblestman.com. There you will find a link to help support me and my efforts. You can also purchase my ebook "[The Ouijiers](#)" which will also help support me. You can read the first two chapters for free.

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Saturday, July 31, 2010

[William John Cox: The Last Generation of Mindkind on Earth](#)

The Last Generation of Mindkind on Earth

by William John Cox [article link](#)

February 21, 2007 | The Voters

The following essay was written many years ago and, although a little lengthy for the Internet, it is posted here for those who like to mix a little philosophy with their politics.

Should the citizens of the United States engage in a peaceful political rebellion to avoid economic disaster and future wars founded, not upon wishful thinking and hopeful denial, but on a simple and specific agenda for effective collective action?

Is not the desire for freedom a universal trait of all sentient beings? Otherwise inequality of opportunity forever retards the intellectual evolution of their species.

Discussion: Once the melody of freedom's song is raised in democratic harmony, it echoes throughout the heavens for all to hear, as there is but peace in all of the universe, and it has been that way for all of eternity. No being, truly thinking, makes war instead of exploring the stars, for without peace, no being can fly far from their birth planet. They can only foul their nest and peck their siblings to death, thinking conditions beyond their nest are the same as surround them, never knowing that there's no Star Wars, except in the blind fantasies of those who never learn to see.

Danger. If there is but peace in all the universe and it has been that way for all of eternity, what then must we do to have any voice in our fate? Are we to continue living in fear of atomic-tipped missiles in the former USSR? Is there a more real danger that one day some small dispute ignites a financial war and China dumps its dollars or OPEC begins to trade its oil in Euros? Or, what if some other tiny economic turmoil twists the stock, bond, currency, and real estate markets into a chaotic contractual tailspin, and for whatever reason, in a single day, paper and electronic money simply cease to have economic relevance and virtually all legal wealth is eliminated? Then, only gold and other metals will have any real value; not silicon, plastic, or credit ratings.

Quick. Then, when there's no gasoline for sale, nor cabs to call, my spare change will be worth more than your former millions, and my bicycle will get me farther than your BMW. Without electricity and wave transmissions, your telephone, computers, televisions, DVDs and stereos are worth less than my knife. If all houses are for sale and all apartments are for rent, all titles are worthless, and all property is available for the taking. If everybody is looking for work, nobody will be hiring. If everything worth stealing has been stolen, you will find nothing to eat, no matter the caliber of your gun, or the number of your last few bullets.

Much like the Earth being struck by a giant asteroid, perhaps one-third, half, or even three-quarters of us, billions all over the world, could all be dead in a matter of months. No possessions, no livestock, no grain, no fruit, no game, nothing: Nothing to eat but the flesh of our own kind, starting with the babies, who will be the first to die.

Dirty. Will it be a blessing if the troubles are prolonged? Unless something is done, unless we, together, take positive action, things will steadily get worse instead of better. Negatives will multiply negatives, violent crime will continue to increase, and the social ills which compel the forgotten to riot will remain uncured.

Fires, floods, earthquakes, and other disasters will not cease to occur, but our governments will cease to do anything to help anyone. At first, as now, our governments will cut to the "basics," and finally will do nothing but collect taxes, sacrifice our youth fighting local warlords, and impose the death penalty for all crimes, either immediately or through forced labor.

Lost Knowledge. The downward spiral may be less steep but just as deadly, for we will soon lose the collective genius of the last two or three generations of accumulated race knowledge. As we gather here together at the threshold of galactic awareness, we stand to lose all we've learned and conceived of in just the last century. Once the last skulls that once contained our vast database of information and experience are laid in the ground – at that moment, the flame of our collective intellect will flicker and die.

When the daily quest for food leaves no time in the day to teach the little children to read, the last surviving texts will be of small value except to start a fire. And, at that precise moment, when the last of us who can read these words and comprehend their meaning, sleep our last dream, we, who once shared these thoughts, will cease to be; our words will be silenced and our learning lost, and our tears and toil will have been for nought.

The Last Generation. Along with our concrete castings, twisted girders, ancient carvings in stone and other megalithic artifacts, eons from now, a few scraps of our language may be found to identify us as the last generation of one of Gaia's children, an aquatic primate, known as human, who once climbed out of the lakes, through the trees and along the rivers, sailed in boats and settled distant shores and waterways around the world, harnessed the atom and flew to the Moon.

There the story will end, and across the universal field of mind and along the eternal corridors of time it will be whispered of how the human infant's first few breaths in the breeze of wisdom were smothered by the wasting virus of deception, hatred, and war. Of how it lay struggling in its earthly crib, looking up with fevered eyes through the cosmic window, fighting with all the strength of its existence, fortified by the antibiotics of knowledge, and its healing properties of wisdom, yet still too weak to see. Nothing more can be said, for we were stillborn.

Song of Mindkind. Or, celestial history may record that we, the last generation of the second millennia following the time of Jesus, fifteen centuries after the teachings of Muhammad, were the last generation to suffer war and who survived birth as Children of Mindkind on Earth. Then, songs will be sung and stories told of our joining minds in a powerful signal of freedom, of the moment our souls sensed the secret and soared with the Spirit of Wisdom to vibrate the waves of eternity with the melody of our children's voices, so they may be forever heard to harmonize in the Universal Choir of Peace.

Reality of Now. As glorious as that image may be, now is now, and let's face it folks; things are bad and the future is looking worse. So, what can we do?

First. We must overcome our fear, and the anger and distrust it compels, and recognize the actual and potential power available in the relatively free, well-educated and communicating society we still enjoy in the United States. We must concentrate our individual vote into its most powerful political focus ever, for if we don't use it with responsibility, we are certain to lose it with alacrity.

Next, we must see us for who we really are. Much like the old advertisement for Ivory soap, we are 99.44% pure. If we look at the totality of the billions of human decisions made every day, worldwide, including all the software, blueprints, CAD drawings, business plans, PERT charts, budgets, contracts, planting of crops, even deciding in the morning what to wear to work, or what to eat at lunch, we will find that we mostly tell each other the truth and closely cooperate to get most things done with the help of others we trust. Otherwise, things simply wouldn't work; you couldn't drive down a highway without striking another car, and you couldn't put your children to bed in the evening without whimpers of hunger.

Travel anywhere in the world and visit any home, and you will only find families struggling each day to live and who love and cherish their babies. They all want a better life for their children, and they mostly teach them the best way to earn it is to tell the truth and work hard.

From the moment we struck the first flint and created language to teach the making of fire and tools, our species has been defined by our ability to mentally synapse beyond the limitations of instinct, acquire and expand knowledge, and to teach the tool of learning and the value of exploration to each new generation. Now, as we learn to step from the fertile fields of Earth into the mind field of time, and to surf the waves of information along the seashores of space and to cast our net upon the wisdom of eternity, we must continue to trust and increasingly respect one another's thoughts on various subjects, though opposed to our own. For, they may be based upon better information or different insights, and even if wrong, we will all profit more from civil, constructive discussion, than from dissension, deception and destruction.

Though some are so sly as to forever lie, and the ability to deceive and disassemble will forever be seen by some as a value in achieving group or individual goals, and though many will forever respond to fear with a violent hatred of others, and real fear once felt can never be erased, and although everyone may forever try to cheat on their taxes, these emotional matters of conscience are but a weak pathology on our physiological soul, best cured by the light of truth and the balm of understanding.

Courage. Each of us must find within ourselves the individual courage to perform one simple rebellious act and elect to decline protection of the computerized secret ballot. Instead of responding like lab animals pushing a touch screen in response to the latest ten-second television smear ad, we can each take a little longer to vote and to carefully consider the candidates presented on the ballot by the various parties and factions who vie for our vote. Once we decide, we can demonstrate our literacy by carefully writing in our personal choice for president of the United States, whether or not his or her name is or is not on the ballot.

Presently, half of all voters don't bother to go to the polls. But, if only 15 to 25% of us were to write in our vote, trust that the politicians will be scrambling to ensure that all votes cast for them are legally counted, as they should be for anyone registering a willingness to accept votes cast in their name for any office of public trust.

Uncomplicated statutes should ensure that existing parties would continue to provide consensus for people with similar political views and the organization and resources to promote those views, and all Constitutional institutions, including the Electoral College would continue to function as intended. There would only be a simple adjustment in who does what. Instead of being offered phoney political platforms, devoid of substance or clearly defined policy, we the people would debate and express our desired policy and elect those candidates most committed to enact it.

National elections could become festive and joyous events, with real political parties to celebrate the end of electioneering and relief from hired advertising. Perhaps there could be a paid holiday and voting could extend over a three-day weekend. It might even take a week to count all of the ballots, and there might have to be a run-off and debates between the top two candidates.

Who can know for sure what may happen? But, surely, the election process which evolves will have to be better than the one we have now, when media exit polls decide elections by the morning coffee break in Iowa, and the loser concedes by lunch time in California. But, by more effectively achieving a better personal understanding with our government and those we elect to represent us, we citizens would gain greater control, our lives would be less restricted, and our vote could become a sacrament of social and civic freedom.

Confidence. Next, we must insist that the ballot include for our vote the twelve most relevant and critical issues facing our government during the upcoming four-year term. Our vote would be an expression of our collective judgement in the making of our own national policy. We would not make law: That is what our elected assemblies are for. However, the voice of a 51/49 percent split would be far different than the roar of an 89/11 vote in curbing the influence of powerful and wealthy special interest groups. If we simple voters are smart enough to earn money and to figure out how to pay our taxes, we are also smart enough to collectively express basic policy to guide our government, and to personally vote for whomever we consider most qualified to act in accordance with our desired policies.

Duty. Everywhere in the universe, on every planet with sentient life, in every nation on Earth, and in every society, every person has a universal right and duty to act, individually and collectively, to secure essential freedom for the nurturing and education of their children. Otherwise, if we, individually, sit around doing nothing except wait for the leadership of our politicians, whose only idea of making policy is to increasingly proscribe otherwise legal behavior, increase penalties, and take away rights (except when they are caught), we will find ourselves alone when our individual worlds collapse around us.

Options. The Voters agree only that inherent in any right to vote is the option to not vote, or to vote and to nullify the election if no viable alternatives are offered. They agree to politely disagree on all other issues and elections. Thus, The Voters takes no position on the various questions which are offered as a sampling of political issues that could be addressed in a National Policy Referendum.

Choices. Should we imagine, however, that all policy questions were thoroughly debated, and such a large margin of voters answered as to be an undeniable expression of desirable public policy, and that sympathetic representatives were elected to work out the best ways to implement those policies, we can for a few moments reflect upon the kind of life we might enjoy here in America, or in any other nation, country, state, or society whose free electors so elect.

Family. The society which evolved from such an election could not be a utopia, for the daily problems of life never go away until solved, and parents will always have to work hard to raise their children and to teach them to survive. But, the society could be one in which our government becomes more compassionate and caring about our family needs and less concerned about itself.

Every citizen, irrespective of wealth or status, requires certain necessities every day of their life, and for those with responsibilities of family, matters of health, education and freedom of travel are essential to social survival. To meet these core needs, all citizens could be equally helped by the resources of national Health, Education and Energy Corps. Each Corps would have its own national service academy, with admission by congressional appointment, and would commission officers dedicated to serving the citizens of a free society and their families.

Then, every parent and every child's burden of caring for the illnesses and injuries of family members would be lightened by the compassion and basic care provided by their Health Corps. Each of your children would receive a minimum community college education, to absorb the vast knowledge that challenges their comprehension and receive better training for employment, and each would be personally encouraged and tutored by the data and resources of their Education Corps. Third, you could treat your family to a inexpensive annual vacation, visit distant relatives, and explore National Parks across America, using free electro-magnetic energy along the interstate highway system fueled by the pool resources organized by your Energy Corps, which draws upon massive micro-wave energy from space collectors and supplies excess capacity to local power companies.

Except for staple food stamp and school lunch programs to help preserve our national agricultural capacity and reserves and the health of our children, the role of the federal government in public welfare would be sharply limited. The primary responsibility for individual and family assistance would be borne by state and local governments, and sustained by the sharing society of the American people and their friends and families.

The work ethic and the essential value of individual labor would be instilled in all students, and those who elect to be sponsored and trained by the Education Corps to contribute, without compensation, at least one year of valuable public service upon adulthood, would earn a baccalaureate education.

The tremendous intellectual energy released by providing equality of opportunity to all children would manifest itself in solutions to our problems which will otherwise never be found. The most imaginative cures for diseases and creative scientific discoveries will be envisioned, not by the children of the wealthy and intellectual elite, but by those who would otherwise never have had a chance to learn. Only unimaginable power has the energy to propel us to the meaningful places within our universe and into its related dimensions – not the puny machines of war we are presently wasting our money on.

A Just And Civil Society. As the virus of deceit and hatred can never be completely eliminated from all who have become infected, personal violence and other serious crimes will continue to be inflicted upon justice could be more finely focused on the most serious crimes, with alternative family courts having the primary responsibility for resolving most cases resulting from alcoholism, drug addiction and other situational offenses.

To eliminate the gigantic profits which feed organized crime and public corruption, and to end the "War on Drugs" against our own society, medical doctors could be authorized to prescribe low-cost drugs for those who become addicted and who elect to participate in an educational recovery and treatment program. Concurrently, local communities could be authorized to collect fees and issue permits for the growing of a few marijuana plants for personal use and for controlling the agricultural cultivation of hemp for the commercial manufacture of clothing and other lawful purposes.

Confinement for serious offenses could be both swift and consistent with the preservation and enhancement of all existing Constitutional guarantees. The judicial exclusion of relevant evidence as a Constitutional remedy for Fourth Amendment search and seizure violations by law enforcement officers could be replaced in those states which enact an alternative civil remedy which provides minimum damages for violations, irrespective of the crime or its punishment, and concurrently within those communities which establish Peer Review Councils, consisting of public and police members to peacefully act together as peers to resolve complaints of police misconduct and to formulate the policies which guide the actions of their local officers.

The primary responsibility for law enforcement would continue to be borne by the people in local communities working as peers with those they appoint to exercise the restraint of police authority and empower to legitimately lay hands on those of us who violate the freedoms and rights of others. The motivation and manner in which we apply physical restraint to ourselves defines, perhaps more than any other single factor, the very nature of justice in any society and the probabilities of its survival.

Personal ownership of firearms can never be entirely prohibited, but legal and civic responsibility for licensing, registration and reasonable purposes would be established by state and local statutes which balances individual protection with community concerns.

Ultimately, in every society placing a supreme value on life, the final responsibility forever rests, at law and in conscience, upon each who elects to possess or use a firearm in detriment of the rights of others and who, without justification, either pulls the trigger, or doesn't.

The role of the federal government in criminal law enforcement would return to its historic place of being restricted to those offenses clearly having a national effect. However, the United States must continue in its responsibility to provide leadership in matters of justice by assisting local and state authorities, as requested, and by establishing a national Justice Academy, along with those of Health, Education, and Energy. Officers of all corps would first be schooled together in the values of a free society, before being specially educated to serve as professional health, education, energy, police, probation, court, and correctional administrators.

With equal access to a fair and impartial justice system, a more civil society would emerge. One in which people are more likely to respect the rights of others and to treat them with dignity, and in which individuals are less likely to respond with violence and anger when their own sensibilities are offended.

Foreign Adventures. As a matter of principle, we must renounce the use of military and economic warfare against the peoples of other nations as an instrument of foreign policy, except in response to an armed invasion or nuclear attack. For other provocations, the president should present the evidence to Congress and identify the individual offender who presents the gravest danger and who controls the threatening instruments of power.

Rather than asking for a Declaration of War, the president could request a simple resolution of Congress naming the accused in a Warrant of Apprehension, demanding he present himself at the World Court of Justice at The Hague to personally answer charges brought there under International Law by the United States against the nation whose government he purports to represent.

Should the accused fail to appear, he would be declared an outlaw, a sizeable reward offered for his apprehension, and we could begin using the most effective media available to inform the people of the outlaw's nation of our grounds for concern and to reassure them that we mean them no harm. We would ask only that they distance themselves from the target of our apprehension and the anticipation of authorized means to secure his personal submission, including the use of deadly force, in whatever form or fashion.

Every member of the United States military service would first receive basic training as emergency medical and rescue technicians by the Health and Justice Corps to become skilled in the performance of their first duty to care for themselves, their compatriots, and the lives of the citizens they are sworn to protect.

Intermediate military training would field a coherent, mobile, well-equipped, and tactically facile force of fighters capable of kicking a** in multiple languages, each individually committed to the home return of all who share the risk of death. Advanced justice training would enable those most capable of more refined individual discretion to work more independently in exercising authority of force outside the United States in actions not requiring group weapons and tactics.

Allied with the Health Corps and the airlift capacity of its large fleet of hospital aircraft used to shuttle patients and relatives to advanced treatment centers, and equipped with the technological spin-off generated by a free and exploring society, the actual use of military force would likely become increasingly rare, but would forever remain rapid in its deployment tactics, and decisive in its strategic effects. For, rather than waiting in the barracks, every position would be staffed by two fighters, with one near home and in training on a yearly rotation, each poised to respond worldwide to any disaster, natural or military, that excites our common concern.

Our military and national intelligence assets exist only to protect and inform us, and have no legitimacy when used within our borders against the citizens of the United States, not for law enforcement or any other aggressive purpose, for no such authority was ever granted by the states to their union, a reservation enshrined by the Second Amendment.

Free Enterprise. No organization or business would ever again have to worry about health costs or worker's compensation claims, they would only have to join hands with their workers in a truly free enterprise system where the interests of labor and capital are balanced in the workplace through negotiation for the greatest service or production at the least cost.

Social Security would continue to provide all workers with the mobility to shop their services throughout the national job market and to retain existing minimum retirement and disability rights. And, states would continue to ensure that their businesses and workers insure for temporary disability and unemployment compensation.

Workers should have an election to also voluntarily participate in a supplemental independent retirement pool funded by untaxed individual savings and union pension plans to primarily invest in the small businesses of America and the municipalities of its citizens, and with insured minimum investment limits.

The role of government in litigation and regulation would largely become one of passively establishing fair and objective standards for use as rebuttable presumptions by injured or aggrieved plaintiffs, rather than having government intervene as an opponent against individuals and their organizations.

For the long haul, American businesses could obtain supplies and ship products throughout the continental marketplace and to the best ports for export over the interstate highways, paying only a fair commercial toll to draw upon the low-cost reserves of the Energy Corp's space power pool.

Fair Transaction-Tax. In our seven-trillion-dollar annual economy, all this could be easily paid for by a fair tax of less than ten percent on all spending, that is, a simple toll on each use of the economic system. Since the poor, working, middle and small business classes have fewer and smaller financial transactions, the wealthy and their multinational corporations, who've always had to spend a lot of money to avoid having any taxable income, would share proportionally in paying the toll for their traffic on our economic highway and their use of our courts to enforce their contracts.

A fair exemption from taxation on spending for those who elect to provide their family with health and education services, and on the cost of basic food and housing, for those not on welfare, would allow the free market to largely provide these necessities.

Money placed into legitimate savings accounts and its earned interest would not be taxed until it is withdrawn and spent. Gifts and bequests of money would not be spending by the donor, but the transaction tax would be paid by the beneficiary when the gift is spent, if not saved.

Foreign Trade. To the extent they are owned by American citizens, businesses, corporations and other organizations would not pay a toll on their payroll, as salaries would be directly passed through to their employees to spend. The additional tax paid by foreign owners would be the price of access to the services of our healthy and well-educated workers and our system of justice.

Inasmuch as imports are first sold at the border, tariffs could be replaced by the up front collection of the toll-tax when foreign corporations first sell their products to their American corporations to sell to us.

Foreign registration and ownership of U.S. patents, copyrights, and other legal protections would also carry a toll on all protected transactions, allowing non-citizens to share the cost of our courts to enforce their rights.

The Search. Lastly, as we cast about in space for sources of safe energy and the knowledge and wisdom to use it, we will become privileged to participate in the peaceful exploration of our universe and its related dimensions, so our children can play the eternal game of mindfully searching for the rarest find of all: A small blue, white, and green planet, with a slight tilt and a large stable moon in warm orbit around a long-lived, medium yellow star, a tiny speck of light, gently sheltered midway to its gaseous giant Jovian siblings, waltzing in the stardust along the whispering wisps of lonely virginal spiral galaxies, shyly waiting to be noticed. Once found, these cradles of life are so precious as to never be lost sight of, or to be forever infected by the virus of deception, hatred and war.

The Discovery. We will never be invaded from space, and our natural disasters cannot be prevented. We will be lovingly watched until we learn the truth about the cause of the disease which infects our minds and troubles our souls. Then, when enough of us learn the use of love to soothe the reptilian instinctual fears existent in all of us, we will be able to seize the courage to peck through the shell of our ignorance and to soar on the winds of time. But, if we've been birthed prematurely and lack strength to evolve, then here someday the dolphins or another of Gaia's children will learn to fly, and may wonder of we and why?

William John Cox is a retired prosecutor and public interest lawyer, author and political activist. His 2004 book is, "You're Not Stupid! Get the Truth: A Brief on the Bush Presidency" is reviewed at <http://www.yourenotstupid.com>. He is currently working on a fact-based political philosophy.

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Fred Reed: WikiLeaks: Who's Hiding What and Why

WikiLeaks: Who's Hiding What and Why

by Fred Reed [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 30, 2010 | Fred On Everything | LewRockwell

Two ways exist of looking at [WikiLeaks](#), the site that publicizes secret military documents and videos. The first is held self-interestedly by the Pentagon and by Fox News, the voice of an angry lower-middle class without too much education. These believe that Wikileakers are traitors, haters of America, who give aid and comfort to the enemy and endanger the lives of Our Boys.

Implicit in the Foxian view is a vague idea that the leaks give away important – well, stuff. You know, maybe frequencies of something or other, or locations of ambushes or, well, things. Important things. The Taliban will use this information to kill American soldiers. The notion is vague, as are those who hold it, but emotionally potent.

The other view, held usually by people who have some experience of Washington, is that the Pentagon is worried not about the divulging of tactical secrets, but about public relations. WikiLeaks doesn't endanger soldiers, insists this way of looking at things, but the war itself, and all the juiceful contracts and promotions and so on entailed by wars.

Which is obvious if you look at what the military (the president, remember, is commander-in-chief) actually does. Remember the military's frantic efforts to suppress the photos of torture at Abu Ghraib, photos of prisoners lying in pools of blood while grinning girl soldiers play with them? These had zero tactical importance. They did however threaten to arouse the Pentagon's worst enemy.

The American public.

In recent decades the military has almost achieved its wettest dream, the separation of wars from the American population. The fielding of a small volunteer army prevents the riots on campus that helped to end the adventure in Asia long ago. "Embedding" reporters with combat units pretty much prevents coverage that might upset people. The media for whatever reasons are now complicit, declining to air what really happens on the ground. All of this allows ghastly behavior, which is what wars always produce, to go forward with little opposition.

Ah, but leaks, YouTube, holes in the wall of silence – these pose real threats to the flow of contracts.

If you don't think that contracts – money – have a great deal to do with wars, reflect that all those hundreds of billions of dollars end up in pockets, and those pockets do not belong to soldiers. Makers of body armor, boots, ammunition, helicopters, on and on, are rolling in gravy. All this half-watched loot flows in cataracts at the price of at most sixty dead American kids a month (and lots of brain-damaged droolers, but what the hey). A bargain. Afghans don't count.

Note that the Pentagon's orchestrated screaming has not been about technical data that might in fact get GIs killed, but about revelation of the ugly things the US is doing to people. Consider the footage of an American helicopter gunship killing pedestrians in a city street, and apparently having just a swell time doing it. This didn't reveal military secrets. But it showed the gunship crew as the butchers they are. Bad juju for the military. PR is all.

The pattern holds. Remember when the White House furiously suppressed video of torture? The Taliban would have garnered no tactically devastating details. But men screaming, choking, crying, bleeding, begging – even the patriotic might gag.

Why are the fun and games at Guantanamo kept secret? Watching a man die under torture does not make it easier for the Taliban to ambush Marines. In no way would it endanger American forces. But it would endanger the war. The golden goose.

Then there was the photo of the hideously wounded and dying GI that was (miraculously) published in the New York Times. SAD Robert Gates (Secretary of Alleged Defense) said that the publication was “irresponsible.” Oh? How so? The Taliban could have gotten no militarily useful pointers from seeing an expanse of red gushing meat (the leg looked to have been nearly severed). But people in Kansas might look and think twice about the war.

The whole profitable circus rides on keeping things abstract. The war isn’t children looking at their entrails in brief puzzlement as they bleed to death. (Just what do you think happens when you bomb a village?) No. It is about Islamofascism, the Gates of Vienna, national security, the War on Terror, and it is done with precision weapons that kill only the evil ones.

Remember when Bush II forbade the photographing of coffins coming back into Dover AFB (I think it was)? That lamentable president said the prohibition was to “protect the privacy” of the dead. (The inside of an anonymous coffin isn’t private?) Those photos contained no military information – but they could have made the public think. Bad. Very bad.

The Taliban can keep the war going, which is fine for the military, but they can’t end it. The American public could. No more contracts.

Can you think of a single instance in which the information to be revealed was of military value? The detailed workings of an IED detector? The name of a Talibani secretly working with the US? The date and place of an attack by a team of Special Forces? Or is the suppression always aimed at keeping Americans in the dark?

There is of course a great deal to hide in any war, but particularly in one such as that in Afghanistan. In any guerrilla war, the soldiers quickly come to hate the locals. In Afghanistan, as in Viet Nam, virtually no American speaks the language, the “intelligence” outfits are clueless, the troops don’t really care who they kill, and pilots bomb according to their own or some intel weenie’s guess as to who they see on the ground. Atrocities, intended or not, occur daily. All of this has to be lied about, concealed, papered over. Concealed from the American public, I mean. The Afghans already know about it.

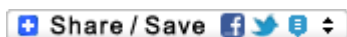
It works. A decade into the war, Fox cheerleads onward, interviewing former CIA thisses and military thats, generating a warm glow of togetherness aimed perhaps more at liberals than at the Islamo-whatevers. The Wickileakers are putting Our Boys in danger as they risk their lives for Freedom and Democracy.

Next to sex, the strongest human instinct seems to be to form groups and hate other groups. I have long suspected that the bulk of humanity has more glands than neurons. It never changes. I need a drink.

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Fred Reed is author of [Nekkid in Austin: Drop Your Inner Child Down a Well](#) and [A Brass Pole in Bangkok: A Thing I Aspire to Be](#). His latest book is [Curmudgeing Through Paradise: Reports from a Fractal Dung Beetle](#). Visit his [blog](#).

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Katharine Dawn: The Significance Of The ‘Support Bradley Manning’ Campaign

The Significance Of The ‘Support Bradley Manning’ Campaign

By Katharine Dawn [article link](#)

29 July, 2010 | Bradleymanning.org

Background

Bradley Manning is the young man charged with leaking classified US military information – including the video of a US Army helicopter gunning down Iraqi civilians and Reuters journalists in Iraq in 2007 that was released to the world via the whistleblower website WikiLeaks as “Collateral Murder”. Bradley is now held in isolation from the outside world, in military detention in Kuwait. Bradley, who reportedly felt un-supported in life, faces – for his alleged actions – up to 52 years imprisonment.

Could the fate of one young man have any bearing upon the fate of the world?

Standing back from the tremendous onrush of these pivotal times, is it possible to realistically gauge the significance of the Support Bradley Manning campaign to the future outcome of the world? That is the objective of this article, exploring divergent scenarios ; I’ll let my esteemed readers and the course of history be the judge. So,

What if the world abandons Bradley Manning and the cause of open, informed public debate he stands for?

* After putting his life on the line to provide the public with information he felt they deserved, the fate of Bradley Manning – who is said to have felt unsupported in life anyway – would be left in the dirty hands of the US military prison system for a substantial portion of his life.

* The wave of public outrage following upon WikiLeaks’ release of “Collateral Murder” would subside... and US war crimes would continue unchecked, unabated and largely unknown.

* Even WikiLeaks may fade into the background noise of a world where secrecy, deception and\ corruption are rife and crimes against humanity, the earth and the future proceed in hellish haste.

But...

What if the world Supports Bradley Manning and the cause of open, informed public debate?

* Global civil society would defend the actions for which Bradley Manning is charged [ie, the leaking of classified documents]; uphold the public’s right to know and demand the release of Bradley Manning and the dismissal of all charges against him: Bradley Manning would walk forth as a free man.

* The “greatest leak in 40 years” [according to Daniel Ellsberg, the man who in 1971 leaked the “Pentagon Papers”, thereby fuelling public outrage over the Vietnam War] would not fade into nothingness as mute testimony to humanity’s apathy and disempowerment, but rather would open wide the floor of public debate and awareness regarding issues of war and peace.

* Bradley’s iconic example and growing public awareness of the professional and secure service of whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks, would open the floodgate for a deluge of whistle-blowing – as individuals everywhere, motivated by the public’s right to know, leak secret documents and classified material exposing corruption, deception and crimes against humanity – and lead to public outcry for real change.

Clearly, I’m hoping and working for the latter future scenario. And you?

Noting how when there's "one man in chains, none are free", a friend comments: "Bradley represents the truth-sayer in us all – if we leave him there, we abandon our own inner calling for truth".

Katharine Dawn may be contacted through www.ec2012.org, <http://www.livingtogethernetwork.net>. Her former article on this issue was "[World History Before Our Eyes](#)".

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Friday, July 30, 2010

[Alexander Cockburn: Will WikiLeaks Help End the Afghan War?](#)

Will WikiLeaks Help End the Afghan War?

by: Alexander Cockburn [article link](#)

30 July 2010 | [t r u t h o u t](#) | Op-Ed

The brave hope of the soldier who sent 92,000 secret documents to WikiLeaks was that the disclosure of willful, casual slaughter of civilians by coalition personnel (with ensuing cover-ups), the utter failure of "nation-building," the venality and corruption of the coalition's Afghan allies and the complicity of Pakistan's intelligence services with the Taliban would cause a wave of revulsion in the United States and among its coalition allies against the war.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange skillfully arranged simultaneous publication of the secret material in The New York Times, the Guardian and Der Spiegel. The story broke on the eve of a war-funding vote in the U.S. Congress.

But on Tuesday evening, the U.S. House of Representatives said aye to a bill already passed by the Senate that funds a \$33 billion, 30,000-troop escalation in Afghanistan. The vote was 308 to 114.

To be sure, more congressmen voted against escalation than a year ago when the no's totted up to only 35. That's a crumb of comfort, but the cruel truth is that within 24 hours the White House and the Pentagon, with the help of influential papers like the Washington Post, had successfully finessed the salvos from WikiLeaks.

'WikiLeaks disclosures unlikely to change course of Afghanistan war' was the Washington Post's Tuesday morning headline. Beneath this headline, the news story said the leaks had been discussed for only 90 seconds at a meeting of senior commanders in the Pentagon. "Senior officials" in the White House even brazenly claimed that it was precisely his reading of these same raw intelligence reports a year ago that prompted President Obama "to pour more troops and money into a war effort that had not received sufficient attention or resources from the Bush administration."

There's some truth in the claim that, long before WikiLeaks, the overall rottenness and futility of the Afghan War had been graphically reported in the press. Earlier this year, for example, reporting by Jerome Starkey of the London Times blew open the U.S. military's cover-up after special forces troops killed two pregnant Afghan women and a girl in a February 2010 raid, in which two Afghan government officials were also killed.

It's oversell to describe the WikiLeaks package as a latter-day Pentagon Papers. But it's undersell to dismiss the revelations as "old stories," as detractors have been doing. The WikiLeaks file is a damning series of snapshots of a disastrous enterprise.

The sad truth is that wars are not often ended by disclosures of their horrors and futility in the press, with consequent public uproar. After Ron Ridenhour and then Seymour Hersh broke the My Lai massacre in 1968 -- when more than 500 men, women and babies were methodically beaten, sexually abused, tortured and then murdered by American GIs in Vietnam -- there was public revulsion, then an escalation in slaughter. The war ran for another seven years.

It is true, as Noam Chomsky pointed out to me, when I asked him for positive examples, that popular protest in the wake of press disclosures "impelled Congress to call off the direct U.S. role in the grotesque bombing of rural Cambodia. Similarly in the late '70s, under popular pressure, Congress barred Carter, later Reagan, from direct participation in virtual genocide in the Guatemalan highlands." Even though New York Times editors edited out the word "indiscriminate" from Thomas Friedman's news report of Israel's bombing of Beirut in 1982, his and other dispatches from Lebanon prompted President Reagan to order Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin to stop, and he did.

But as Chomsky concluded in his note to me, "I think one will find very few such examples, and almost none in the case of really major war crimes."

What does end wars? One side is annihilated, the money runs out, the troops mutiny, the government falls or fears it will. With the U.S. war in Afghanistan, none of these conditions has yet been met.

The U.S. began the destruction of Afghanistan in 1979, when President Jimmy Carter and his National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski started financing the mullahs and warlords in the largest and most expensive operation in the CIA's history until that time.

Here we are, more than three decades later, half-buried under a pile of horrifying reports about a destroyed land of desolate savagery, and what did one hear on many news commentaries earlier this week? Indignant bleats, often from liberals, about WikiLeaks' "irresponsibility" in releasing the documents. Shoot the messenger!

Alexander Cockburn is co-editor with Jeffrey St. Clair of the muckraking newsletter [CounterPunch](#). He is also co-author of the new book *"Dime's Worth of Difference: Beyond the Lesser of Two Evils,"* available through www.counterpunch.com.

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The political spinning of the WikiLeaks exposé: Antiwar whistle-blowing or war propaganda?

By Larry Chin [article link](#)

Jul 30, 2010 | Online Journal

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Thursday, July 29, 2010

Andrew Bacevich: Giving Up On Victory, Not War

The End of (Military) History? The US, Israel, and the Failure of the Western Way of War

by Andrew Bacevich [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 29, 2010 | TomDispatch | CommonDreams

"In watching the flow of events over the past decade or so, it is hard to avoid the feeling that something very fundamental has happened in world history." This sentiment, introducing the essay that made Francis Fukuyama a household name, commands renewed attention today, albeit from a different perspective.

Developments during the 1980s, above all the winding down of the Cold War, had convinced Fukuyama that the "end of history" was at hand. "The triumph of the West, of the Western idea," he wrote in 1989, "is evident... in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism."

Today the West no longer looks quite so triumphant. Yet events during the first decade of the present century have delivered history to another endpoint of sorts. Although Western liberalism may retain considerable appeal, the Western way of war has run its course.

For Fukuyama, history implied ideological competition, a contest pitting democratic capitalism against fascism and communism. When he wrote his famous essay, that contest was reaching an apparently definitive conclusion.

Yet from start to finish, military might had determined that competition's course as much as ideology. Throughout much of the twentieth century, great powers had vied with one another to create new, or more effective, instruments of coercion. Military innovation assumed many forms. Most obviously, there were the weapons: dreadnoughts and aircraft carriers, rockets and missiles, poison gas, and atomic bombs -- the list is a long one. In their effort to gain an edge, however, nations devoted equal attention to other factors: doctrine and organization, training systems and mobilization schemes, intelligence collection and war plans.

All of this furious activity, whether undertaken by France or Great Britain, Russia or Germany, Japan or the United States, derived from a common belief in the plausibility of victory. Expressed in simplest terms, the Western military tradition could be reduced to this proposition: war remains a viable instrument of statecraft, the accoutrements of modernity serving, if anything, to enhance its utility.

Grand Illusions

That was theory. Reality, above all the two world wars of the last century, told a decidedly different story. Armed conflict in the industrial age reached new heights of lethality and destructiveness. Once begun, wars devoured everything, inflicting staggering material, psychological, and moral damage. Pain vastly exceeded gain. In that regard, the war of 1914-1918 became emblematic: even the winners ended up losers. When fighting eventually stopped, the victors were left not to celebrate but to mourn. As a consequence, well before Fukuyama penned his essay, faith in war's problem-solving capacity had begun to erode. As early as 1945, among several great powers -- thanks to war, now great in name only -- that faith disappeared altogether.

Among nations classified as liberal democracies, only two resisted this trend. One was the United States, the sole major belligerent to emerge from the Second World War stronger, richer, and more confident. The second was Israel, created as a direct consequence of the horrors unleashed by that cataclysm. By the 1950s, both countries subscribed to this common conviction: national security (and, arguably, national survival) demanded unambiguous military superiority. In the lexicon of American and Israeli politics, "peace" was a codeword. The essential prerequisite for peace was for any and all adversaries, real or potential, to accept a condition of permanent inferiority. In this regard, the two nations -- not yet intimate allies -- stood apart from the rest of the Western world.

So even as they professed their devotion to peace, civilian and military elites in the United States and Israel prepared obsessively for war. They saw no contradiction between rhetoric and reality.

Yet belief in the efficacy of military power almost inevitably breeds the temptation to put that power to work. "Peace through strength" easily enough becomes "peace through war." Israel succumbed to this temptation in 1967. For Israelis, the Six Day War proved a turning point. Plucky David defeated, and then became, Goliath. Even as the United States was flailing about in Vietnam, Israel had evidently succeeded in definitively mastering war.

A quarter-century later, U.S. forces seemingly caught up. In 1991, Operation Desert Storm, George H.W. Bush's war against Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, showed that American troops like Israeli soldiers knew how to win quickly, cheaply, and humanely. Generals like H. Norman Schwarzkopf persuaded themselves that their brief desert campaign against Iraq had replicated -- even eclipsed -- the battlefield exploits of such famous Israeli warriors as Moshe Dayan and Yitzhak Rabin. Vietnam faded into irrelevance.

For both Israel and the United States, however, appearances proved deceptive. Apart from fostering grand illusions, the splendid wars of 1967 and 1991 decided little. In both cases, victory turned out to be more apparent than real. Worse, triumphalism fostered massive future miscalculation.

On the Golan Heights, in Gaza, and throughout the West Bank, proponents of a Greater Israel -- disregarding Washington's objections -- set out to assert permanent control over territory that Israel had seized. Yet "facts on the ground" created by successive waves of Jewish settlers did little to enhance Israeli security. They succeeded chiefly in shackling Israel to a rapidly growing and resentful Palestinian population that it could neither pacify nor assimilate.

In the Persian Gulf, the benefits reaped by the United States after 1991 likewise turned out to be ephemeral. Saddam Hussein survived and became in the eyes of successive American administrations an imminent threat to regional stability. This perception prompted (or provided a pretext for) a radical reorientation of strategy in Washington. No longer content to prevent an unfriendly outside power from controlling the oil-rich Persian Gulf, Washington now sought to dominate the entire Greater Middle East. Hegemony became the aim. Yet the United States proved no more successful than Israel in imposing its writ.

During the 1990s, the Pentagon embarked willy-nilly upon what became its own variant of a settlement policy. Yet U.S. bases dotting the Islamic world and U.S. forces operating in the region proved hardly more welcome than the Israeli settlements dotting the occupied territories and the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) assigned to protect them. In both cases, presence provoked (or provided a pretext for) resistance. Just as Palestinians vented their anger at the Zionists in their midst, radical Islamists targeted Americans whom they regarded as neo-colonial infidels.

Stuck

No one doubted that Israelis (regionally) and Americans (globally) enjoyed unquestioned military dominance. Throughout Israel's near abroad, its tanks, fighter-bombers, and warships operated at will. So, too, did American tanks, fighter-bombers, and warships wherever they were sent.

So what? Events made it increasingly evident that military dominance did not translate into concrete political advantage. Rather than enhancing the prospects for peace, coercion produced ever more complications. No matter how badly battered and beaten, the "terrorists" (a catch-all term applied to anyone resisting Israeli or American authority) weren't intimidated, remained unrepentant, and kept coming back for more.

Israel ran smack into this problem during Operation Peace for Galilee, its 1982 intervention in Lebanon. U.S. forces encountered it a decade later during Operation Restore Hope, the West's gloriously titled foray into Somalia. Lebanon possessed a puny army; Somalia had none at all. Rather than producing peace or restoring hope, however, both operations ended in frustration, embarrassment, and failure.

And those operations proved but harbingers of worse to come. By the 1980s, the IDF's glory days were past. Rather than lightning strikes deep into the enemy rear, the narrative of Israeli military history became a cheerless recital of dirty wars -- unconventional conflicts against irregular forces yielding problematic results. The First Intifada (1987-1993), the Second Intifada (2000-2005), a second Lebanon War (2006), and Operation Cast Lead, the notorious 2008-2009 incursion into Gaza, all conformed to this pattern.

Meanwhile, the differential between Palestinian and Jewish Israeli birth rates emerged as a looming threat -- a "demographic bomb," Benjamin Netanyahu called it. Here were new facts on the ground that military forces, unless employed pursuant to a policy of ethnic cleansing, could do little to redress. Even as the IDF tried repeatedly and futilely to bludgeon Hamas and Hezbollah into submission, demographic trends continued to suggest that within a generation a majority of the population within Israel and the occupied territories would be Arab.

Trailing a decade or so behind Israel, the United States military nonetheless succeeded in duplicating the IDF's experience. Moments of glory remained, but they would prove fleeting indeed. After 9/11, Washington's efforts to transform (or "liberate") the Greater Middle East kicked into high gear. In Afghanistan and Iraq, George W. Bush's Global War on Terror began impressively enough, as U.S. forces operated with a speed and élan that had once been an Israeli trademark. Thanks to "shock and awe," Kabul fell, followed less than a year and a half later by Baghdad. As one senior Army general explained to Congress in 2004, the Pentagon had war all figured out:

"We are now able to create decision superiority that is enabled by networked systems, new sensors and command and control capabilities that are producing unprecedented near real time situational awareness, increased information availability, and an ability to deliver precision munitions throughout the breadth and depth of the battlespace... Combined, these capabilities of the future networked force will leverage information dominance, speed and precision, and result in decision superiority."

The key phrase in this mass of techno-blather was the one that occurred twice: "decision superiority." At that moment, the officer corps, like the Bush administration, was still convinced that it knew how to win.

Such claims of success, however, proved obscenely premature. Campaigns advertised as being wrapped up in weeks dragged on for years, while American troops struggled with their own intifadas. When it came to achieving decisions that actually stuck, the Pentagon (like the IDF) remained clueless.

Winless

If any overarching conclusion emerges from the Afghan and Iraq Wars (and from their Israeli equivalents), it's this: victory is a chimera. Counting on today's enemy to yield in the face of superior force makes about as much sense as buying lottery tickets to pay the mortgage: you better be really lucky.

Meanwhile, as the U.S. economy went into a tailspin, Americans contemplated their equivalent of Israel's "demographic bomb" -- a "fiscal bomb." Ingrained habits of profligacy, both individual and collective, held out the prospect of long-term stagnation: no growth, no jobs, no fun. Out-of-control spending on endless wars exacerbated that threat.

By 2007, the American officer corps itself gave up on victory, although without giving up on war. First in Iraq, then in Afghanistan, priorities shifted. High-ranking generals shelved their expectations of winning -- at least as a Rabin or Schwarzkopf would have understood that term. They sought instead to not lose. In Washington as in U.S. military command posts, the avoidance of outright defeat emerged as the new gold standard of success.

As a consequence, U.S. troops today sally forth from their base camps not to defeat the enemy, but to "protect the people," consistent with the latest doctrinal fashion. Meanwhile, tea-sipping U.S. commanders cut deals with warlords and tribal chieftains in hopes of persuading guerrillas to lay down their arms.

A new conventional wisdom has taken hold, endorsed by everyone from new Afghan War commander General David Petraeus, the most celebrated soldier of this American age, to Barack Obama, commander-in-chief and Nobel Peace Prize

laureate. For the conflicts in which the United States finds itself enmeshed, "military solutions" do not exist. As Petraeus himself has emphasized, "we can't kill our way out of" the fix we're in. In this way, he also pronounced a eulogy on the Western conception of warfare of the last two centuries.

The Unasked Question

What then are the implications of arriving at the end of Western military history?

In his famous essay, Fukuyama cautioned against thinking that the end of ideological history heralded the arrival of global peace and harmony. Peoples and nations, he predicted, would still find plenty to squabble about.

With the end of military history, a similar expectation applies. Politically motivated violence will persist and may in specific instances even retain marginal utility. Yet the prospect of Big Wars solving Big Problems is probably gone for good. Certainly, no one in their right mind, Israeli or American, can believe that a continued resort to force will remedy whatever it is that fuels anti-Israeli or anti-American antagonism throughout much of the Islamic world. To expect persistence to produce something different or better is moonshine.

It remains to be seen whether Israel and the United States can come to terms with the end of military history. Other nations have long since done so, accommodating themselves to the changing rhythms of international politics. That they do so is evidence not of virtue, but of shrewdness. China, for example, shows little eagerness to disarm. Yet as Beijing expands its reach and influence, it emphasizes trade, investment, and development assistance. Meanwhile, the People's Liberation Army stays home. China has stolen a page from an old American playbook, having become today the preeminent practitioner of "dollar diplomacy."

The collapse of the Western military tradition confronts Israel with limited choices, none of them attractive. Given the history of Judaism and the history of Israel itself, a reluctance of Israeli Jews to entrust their safety and security to the good will of their neighbors or the warm regards of the international community is understandable. In a mere six decades, the Zionist project has produced a vibrant, flourishing state. Why put all that at risk? Although the demographic bomb may be ticking, no one really knows how much time remains on the clock. If Israelis are inclined to continue putting their trust in (American-supplied) Israeli arms while hoping for the best, who can blame them?

In theory, the United States, sharing none of Israel's demographic or geographic constraints and, far more richly endowed, should enjoy far greater freedom of action. Unfortunately, Washington has a vested interest in preserving the status quo, no matter how much it costs or where it leads. For the military-industrial complex, there are contracts to win and buckets of money to be made. For those who dwell in the bowels of the national security state, there are prerogatives to protect. For elected officials, there are campaign contributors to satisfy. For appointed officials, civilian and military, there are ambitions to be pursued.

And always there is a chattering clique of militarists, calling for jihad and insisting on ever greater exertions, while remaining alert to any hint of backsliding. In Washington, members of this militarist camp, by no means coincidentally including many of the voices that most insistently defend Israeli bellicosity, tacitly collaborate in excluding or marginalizing views that they deem heretical. As a consequence, what passes for debate on matters relating to national security is a sham. Thus are we invited to believe, for example, that General Petraeus's appointment as the umpteenth U.S. commander in Afghanistan constitutes a milestone on the way to ultimate success.

Nearly 20 years ago, a querulous Madeleine Albright demanded to know: "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?" Today, an altogether different question deserves our attention: What's the point of constantly using our superb military if doing so doesn't actually work?

Washington's refusal to pose that question provides a measure of the corruption and dishonesty permeating our politics.

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Vi Ransel: The Trees of the Particular

The Trees of the Particular:

Why the Tea Party is Just Another Tree In the Forest of Identity Politics

by Vi Ransel [article link](#)

July 8, 2010 | Global Research

You can't see the forest for the tea bags.

"The twentieth century has been characterized by three developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy.

Corporate propaganda directed...to the public at large, has two main objectives: to identify the free-enterprise system in popular consciousness with every cherished value, and to identify interventionist governments and strong unions (the only agencies capable of checking the complete domination of society by the corporations) with tyranny, oppression and even subversion." (1)

"One of the saddest lessons of history is this: If we've been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We're no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozle has captured us. It is simply too painful to acknowledge --even to ourselves--that we've been so credulous." (2)

People in a group who see themselves as "all in the same boat" tend to cooperate to promote the group's general welfare and invest in the common good to create prosperity for all. That's a social contract. But we're not all in the same boat. A very few of us are on a luxury liner and the rest of us are lucky if we're issued leaky life rafts or tattered life preservers.

Those on the luxury liner encourage groups within the larger group to see themselves as separate, and further, that gains by any one group comes at the expense of the other groups. But this is true only insofar as the group at the top of the economic pyramid, the "opulent minority," is taking from them all. Internal conflicts within the larger group escalate, tearing it apart. Once these splinter groups have done their work for them, (they always have someone to do their work for them), the "opulent minority" comes to feast on the financial remains of the social contract.

If a government of the people does not provide a safety net that some of us - the poor, children, the aged, minorities, the disabled, the jobless and the homeless - cannot provide for ourselves, we will be crushed underfoot by the "opulent minority," the carpet of our bodies simply Sir Walter Raleigh's cloak laid down for the Queen Elizabeth of the "opulent minority" to tread upon on the way to profit.

But Americans are rigidly schooled not to connect the dots, whether they're facts, logical arguments, pictures-worth-a-thousand-words, or individual "human interest" stories. We may have access to, and in fact, be carpet-bombed 24/7 with dots of information, but the sheer number of individual dots, and the fact that they have no context, is designed to numb the mind rather than cause them to be assembled in the dangerously democratic pontilism of deliberate, deductive thought. We

are programmed to see nothing - no thing - unless it relates to us personally and our relationship with the matrix of materialism.

The larger reality of class is denied, and each experience appears completely individual. And even when such experiences are the obvious and common result of policy decisions made by corporate shareholders via their congressional marionettes, individual solutions to social and economic problems created by those decisions are demanded of the victims. People are left on their own to find solutions to the problems of joblessness, bankruptcy and foreclosure exacerbated by downsizing and outsourcing; the manipulated financial "crisis;" skyrocketing healthcare, energy and food costs; and substandard education. Americans take on the responsibility that belongs to a corporate system designed to produce those very outcomes. We allow ourselves to believe that we are the cause of the system's effect. If only we had tried harder we would not need to be helped. We would have pulled ourselves up by the bootstraps and got 'er done.

John Kozy says the United States is not a true society, that we're merely groups of individuals with "various and...opposing beliefs who often have little tolerance for...others." We don't live together, just side by side. Further, such groups "...openly seek to promote their own interests at the expense of the interests of all." He goes on to say that people who fall outside dominant groups are abandoned, and that "No true society...leave(s) those outside the dominant group abandoned." (3)

The society of the family, especially the extended family, has historically been "the individual's support group. ...when a person becomes ill or incapacitated, when children are orphaned, when people become elderly, the family provides the needed support" (4) because the individual may not be able to take care of himself. But under corporate capitalism, families are destroyed, torn apart by the need to follow jobs while being forced to live on the lowest wage possible. Support disappears along with the extended family, and the individual who can no longer care for himself unaided is abandoned.

And when people seek support from the wider society, they're dismissed as parasites who want to be taken care of by a "nanny state." But "the state" doesn't provide people with anything. "The state" is the people, who enact laws and collect taxes to fund social programs that provide a social safety net in the event that corporate capitalism, in its unrelenting drive for profit fails, as it is designed to do, regularly, and causes them to need such programs after destroying their familial support systems.

The acceptance of the need to make money in order to exist, and its subsequent, godlike primacy in our lives, dissolves all our relationships. Its exchange replaces them, becoming the only "bond" to each other we have left.

We are "The first people on earth who (have) no practical need of our neighbors." Before the financial "crisis," all your neighbors "could have died overnight...and while you might have been sad, you wouldn't have been inconvenienced. Our economy, unlike any that came before it, is designed to work without the input of your neighbors. ... If you have a credit card and an Internet connection, you can order most of what you need and have it left anonymously at your door." (5) (emphasis in original)

The carefully cultivated alienation of "consumers" creates a bastardized, jaded and jagged form of "rugged individualism," excised of empathy and apotheosized. It "frees" us from interdependence on one another - and makes us completely dependent on corporations. And economic dependence always comes with a price, the special prerogatives of those upon whom you are dependent to do with you as they will. We cannot purchase a home, a car or use a credit card without the enabling hand of the finance corporations. We are not safe from the ravages of a sudden accident or a major illness without monthly payments to the insurance corporations, which allow us to pay pharmaceutical corporations and hospital corporations for our care. We ride to work, for a large corporation, in cars bought from the auto corporations and fueled by the energy corporations, which also light, heat and power our homes, purchased from real estate corporations. We communicate with each other primarily via the telecommunications corporations and receive our information, and much of our entertainment, from media corporations. We cannot even feed ourselves without going to supermarkets and fast food franchises to purchase the products of agricultural corporations.

Corporations are a stunningly efficient means of accumulating and concentrating wealth, which can then be translated into political power. Democracy disperses power. Corporations concentrate power. Corporations are property. And property as power, accumulated in the hands of a few invariably becomes power over the majority, power over their thoughts, their

livelihoods, their communities, their government and their environment. Natural persons, human beings, are fast becoming faceless commodities, mere human resources to be consumed by shareholders hiding behind the powerful shield of property, the faceless, artificial persons also known as corporations.

And because our capitalist "economic system...compounds the problem by the idiotic dogma that the only groups that corporations are responsible to are their shareholders," (6) people who have been dependent on corporations, and are subsequently screwed by them, have no place to turn but the social safety net created by their government.

But should we actually connect these dots, the cognitive dissonance, the pain of holding two diametrically-opposed thoughts at the same time, jerks us back into the comfortable straitjacket of the American Dream like dogs wearing shock collars. We cannot accept the truth, hidden in plain sight, that capitalism, the system which has been sold to us as exemplifying the American Dream, is actually a nightmarish, serial murderer-rapist which forces us to tell it how much we love it as it rapes and murders us. And further, we cannot accept the part that we play in it.

Truth is an alien entity. It might set us free and turn us out of our faux-gilded cages without our tawdry toys and plastic/electronic pacifiers. And since the "opulent minority" realizes that "freedom is participation in power," (7) which is knowledge, our opinion is continuously and meticulously manufactured for us by all five major hubs of the corporate-owned "news" media, a compendium of the interests and opinions of their major shareholders. This is not news. "News is what powerful people don't want you to know. Everything else is just public relations." (8)

Such "news" is repeated endlessly in endless confections "...to give you the idea that you have freedom of choice...you don't. You have no choice. You have owners. They own you. They own everything. They own all the important land. They own, and control the corporations. They've long since bought, and paid for the Senate, the Congress, the state houses, the city halls, they got the judges in their back pockets and they own all the big media companies, so they control just about all of the news and the information you get to hear. They got you by the balls. They spend billions of dollars every year lobbying...lobbying, to get what they want...We know what they want. They want more for themselves and less for everybody else, but I'll tell you what they don't want...They don't want a population of citizens capable of critical thinking. They don't want well informed, well educated people capable of critical thinking." (9)

What they want is us immersed in the corporate-created "culture," three-pound cheeseburger in hand, talking into a Bluetooth while driving an SUV, heading home to our McMansions made of pressed sawdust patties surrounded by resin gnomes made in China, protected by disease care that looks after our diabetes, heart disease, obesity and cancers created by the producers of foodlike products polluted by the same poisonous organophosphates developed to gas soldiers in World War I and refined for use in gas chambers in World War II. We mainline their media like junkies and lie down for these corporations and their shareholders like cheap whores, willing to call the choice from among their thousands of narcotic trinkets freedom. We trade our identities, our "souls," our "selves" for these poisonous, quality-less "products," which are nothing more than a means to relieve us of the money we received for the work of creating the wealth that made the production of those tawdry trinkets possible.

And the "opulent minority" prefers that we aid and abet, or at least ignore, their system of repellent social immorality by concentrating on satisfying our material whims (as they do), calling it individualism. But individualism is what they steal by selling myriad commodities as personality components which we come to call our "selves." And though we believe we are unique individuals, what we are are the perfect, isolated atoms of capitalism, the Borg awash in others exploited exactly like ourselves, with engineered boundaries impervious to penetration by either empathy or deep thought, our self-absorption spent in intense concentration not on the individual self inside, but that impervious outer surface, which is not the "self" at all, but an insecure avatar, the vehicle, not the driver.

And as we lose more of our "selves," relying on the unthinking ease of living vicariously through the avatars we've constructed of parts purchased from corporations, we lose more and more of our self-respect (there's no self left to respect). And the "opulent minority," which has never respected us anyway, see in our craven behavior, a confirmation of their contempt for us.

For the chance to be like them, we compete against each other for the slim-to-none chance at grabbing the brass class ring and throw away the very power we possess - solidarity - as the demos, the people, of a democracy. And this is by design, since democracy threatens minority rule by bridging the moat they create by injecting group prejudices meant to keep us fragmented - racism, sexism, agism, homophobia, xenophobia, religious fanaticism, etc. - because politics consists of deciding who gets what and how much. Therefore it cannot be separated from daily life. And the people cannot be separated from each other if the participatory work of democracy is to be accomplished.

"You do not love humanity if you seek to divide humanity into jealous camps. ...the man who seeks to make personal capital out of the passions of his fellow men. ...has lost touch with the ideal of America." (10)

As far as the "opulent minority" is concerned, the ideal is subordination. And the best way to enforce it is to manufacture poor people. "It is also in the interest of a tyrant to keep his people poor, so that they may not be able to afford the cost of protecting themselves by arms and be so occupied with their daily lives that they have no time for rebellion." (11) When the minimum wage leaves workers begging, it creates the conditions for dependence - and submission. And this can be carried to the point where the abused develop Stockholm Syndrome, growing to defend, and even love, their abusers, actually insisting that their ignorance and abuse be protected and perpetuated. "The more we do to you, the less you seem to believe we are doing it." (12) Poverty doesn't just happen. Someone has to cultivate it very carefully. And it must be so abject, so loathsome that the remaining working and middle classes fear its contagion like the 14th century's Black Plague.

The "opulent minority" also believes that education is a good thing, as long as it furthers our submission and prepares us for a busywork job. If it makes you think, it's no longer such a good thing, because, as Frederick Douglass said, "Education makes a man unfit to be a slave." Our parents, previously indoctrinated, begin our training and then surrender us to an authoritarian "educational" system where we are stripped of our personal identity and our free will, while ethically-cleansed of our conscience and the responsibility for making meaningful choices. Once stripped of autonomy, all the important decisions can be made for us. We're designed that way.

John D. Rockefeller's General Education Board made it plain.

"In our dreams, we have limitless resources and the people yield themselves with perfect docility to our molding hands. The present education conventions fade from their minds, and unhampered by tradition, we work our own good will upon a grateful and responsive rural folk. We shall not try to make these people or any of their children into philosophers or men of learning, or men of science. We have not to raise up from among them authors, editors, poets or doctors, preachers, politicians, statesmen, of whom we have an ample supply. The task we set before ourselves is very simple as well as a very beautiful one, to train these people as we find them to do in a perfect way the things their fathers and mothers are doing in an imperfect way, in the homes, in the shops and on the farm." (13)

John D. Rockefeller was the principal progenitor of Standard Oil, the greatest corporate monopoly since the British East India Company. He and many like-minded plutocrats decided that the rabble could have all the democratic freedoms they wanted - as long as they were too ignorant, overworked and distracted to be able to use them. "Those who are fit to rule realize there is no morality and that there is only one natural right - the right of the superior to rule over the inferior..." (14) Only the winners of the Social Darwinist lottery deserve to be treated like human beings. The rest of us are just spare, and easily replaceable, parts in the corporate mechanism for accumulating and concentrating wealth, which is then translated into political power.

And to make sure the parts know their place, the skill has been taken out of the work process. Every step in the making of, for instance, a dining room chair, is tightly controlled. Where the fine craftsmanship of Hepplewhite and Chippendale are highly prized among the "opulent minority," the "man" in craftsmanship must be divested of the knowledge and ability that goes into the making of such fine furniture lest he believe he's created something of value, and, in turn, that he is something of value.

The process is de-skilled, broken down into simple rules, formulas and actions, and all knowledge of the complete process is transferred to an overseer class of management. Overseers can conduct time-and-motion studies to extract the maximum productivity for each step in a process designed to require minimal input on the part of the worker/tool.

It is particularly focused on divorcing thought from action. The overseers will do all the thinking, thank you. And those who do all of the work will do none of the thinking - or decision-making. Those who do the thinking and decision-making will do none of the actual work. Workers are reduced to tools made of flesh, bodies attached to hands that make the discrete twists and turns and twitches of the production process.

Every one of these minute and meaningless tasks is tightly controlled by the overseers. Each set of hands receives a set of detailed instructions: the precise description of the task to be completed; the method which must be used to complete it; and how much time the hands are allowed in which to complete it.

The worker is no longer a craftsman creating a fine piece of furniture, but a small part of a machine, adaptable to a wide variety of exceedingly simple tasks, such as machine-cutting, sanding, varnishing, polishing, gluing, sewing a straight seam, placing stuffing under a chair pad, etc. And we wind up with a cavalierly-made dining room chair, which it is hoped will fall apart quickly and be replaced, all the while off-gassing formaldehyde as it sits at the dining room table.

This method, created by Frederick Winslow Taylor (Taylorism) in the 19th century, works so well to cut costs and to produce submission on the part of the worker/hands that it's "spread to (most) other sectors of the economy, including food service, education, and medicine." (15)

And as labor, the great tradeoff we make is the Cardinal Act of Consumption. We accept the opportunity to imitate the lifestyles of the rich and shameless as just compensation for becoming obedient, alienated cogs in the corporate profit-making machine. We unthinkingly exchange our wages for the commodities that enable this emulation. The function of this mindless mimicry is to conceal class difference.

And the less we think, the more we will buy, thus more profit is created. The faster we swipe those plastic I.O.U./slave chain cards, the more time we have to swipe them again. Whether we swipe them for resin gnomes, sawdust homes, mis-education, poisonous foodlike products, disease care, electronic distractions, media propaganda or gas for SUVs, the Treadmill of Endless Purchase must go on, because the more we think about a purchase, the less likely we are to make it.

"Our enormously productive economy...demands that we make consumption a way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction in consumption... We need things consumed, burned up, replaced and discarded at an ever-accelerating rate." (16)

We have been engineered into "...a people that value ease and convenience over self education, sacrifice and truth. ... We want the kind of life...that does not place demands on us. We want to be entertained, not informed by burdensome truths that may assault our conscience and cause psychological injury." (17)

"Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth - more even than death...Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible, thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habit." (18)

Knowledge is dangerous. Knowledge creates doubt. Knowledge is power. That's why we're not allowed to have it. That's what's missing in our test score-based, obedience schooling. That's why real information is missing in corporate-created entertainews. That's why it was illegal to teach slaves to read. That's what pissed off the Church about the printing press. And that's why knowledge (of good and evil) was given the rap of original sin. A person who thinks for himself is a threat to minority rule. Lots of people who think for themselves can become a democracy, the very antithesis of minority rule.

And the best way to prevent democracy is to turn the people against each other and against their government, which is, in fact, themselves, and the only real check on predatory corporatism. This was the smartest, most evilly efficient thing the "opulent minority" has ever accomplished. And thus "...incalculable damage has been done to American society. Just exactly as was intended." (19)

This allowed the radical restructuring of the United States government in order to serve the interests of corporate shareholders. Government has been occupied by the minions of the "opulent minority" and turned into an institutionalized system of inequality. Purchased politicians use it as a pipeline to funnel wealth from American taxpayers to the "opulent

minority" ensconced behind the corporate curtain of faux freedom and democracy. And as the overall standard of living declines due to their financial coup d'etat, our pain is their gain. The increase in the population of prey due to job loss, bankruptcy, foreclosure, homelessness and hunger actually stimulates these predators to pluck us like the low-hanging fruit of their poisonous corporate tree.

They've realized their parasitic "goal of radically redistributing wealth in America." They've done away with almost all of the government-created speed bumps that impeded their progress in the race to uncontested minority rule, the "...presumptive power to tax, to regulate, to provide services, and to set the fundamental rules for...economic life in a society. All of these had to be challenged to insure that a wealthy overclass could become fantastically more wealthy, and the easiest way to do that was to corrode the status and power of government itself. Teaching people to hate their own government is one way to divest them of it..." (20)

They've committed "...the crime of the century...the evisceration of the state. This must be done (or, more accurately, it must be done in some respects but absolutely not in others) because the state is the only force capable of standing up to the power of concentrated wealth, and because the state nominally speaks for the public and the public interest, as against the private interest." (21)

By the late 1960s the post-war economic boom had begun to bust, and the Democratic Party started to distance itself from Labor and from the New Deal policies that had not only created the greatest period of American prosperity overall, but the largest middle class in the history of the world. As it moved away from even the timid social reforms of the New Deal, the Democratic Party re-branded itself, christening diversity as the pinnacle of progressivism and incorporating Identity Politics into its platform.

Identity Politics are those of specific subsets of the population as a whole. They may be delineated by race, sex, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation, age, economic or educational status, ideology, et al. When members of these groups see themselves as isolated subsets within the population, there's less chance that they'll come together in solidarity to disrupt minority rule. Under capitalism, they are especially encouraged, unless of course they become too powerful in their own right or threaten to coalesce. For instance, the Civil Rights Movement was threatening to become an overall Poor People's Movement. It's for this reason that Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated.

The Democratic Party used Identity Politics to co-opt elite layers of minorities and women by dispensing privileges, even as the living standards for the majority of Democratic voters deteriorated across the board. They used these Balkanized, competing interest groups to disguise the party's move further and further to the right. Unions faded into the background and diversity was used as a front to hide the party's rejection of any concept of "democracy that included economic equality and regulation of the corporate-financial elite." (22) It culminated in the New Democrats of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), like Al Gore, Bill Clinton, and Joe Lieberman, who hid the Party's capitulation to, and appeasement of, the Right, and in fact, its joining of the Right in the Money Party.

But the use of Identity Politics as a front was not restricted to the Democrats. Identity Politics, sold as empowerment by both parties since the 60s, have had the overall effect of disuniting those who ought to be in solidarity with each other, stunting democracy, which requires the people's commonality to function.

"If you have watched any old mob movies, you know that any racket needs a front. In America the front is called democracy. Like the term populism, the people have no idea what democracy really is, but has something to do with the free market capitalism... And it certainly it has to do with every citizen having a small piece in the determination of national matters. Clearly untrue as that is, nevertheless it is one helluva sales point, revered by the proles and not to be fucked with if you are to maintain the illusion of the consent of the people among the people. The front." (23)

In the late 60s and early 70s Identity Politics became a two-party game. Students and anti-war/peace demonstrators were christened "bums" (Nixon's word) and the "silent majority" was pitted against them, cast as patriotic, real Americans versus Communist, hippie traitors in what was to become the "culture wars" and create divisions between us that we have yet to close.

Republicans used wedge issues to create an Identity Politics of their own. Nixon's Southern Strategy used race to get white southern Democrats into the Republican Party, just as Democrats tried to manipulate minorities with Civil Rights laws. Republicans won the day, since the population harbored a greater percentage of racist whites than Blacks, who made up only 12% of the population.

It's to the "opulent minority's" advantage to set Americans against each other and to take them on one separate issue, one action, and/or one group at a time where the majority of the people can be bogged down and defeated over and over and over again with peripheral issues and those that should remain private and personal lifestyle choices. The point of the arguments over "hot button" issues is that they're not meant to be resolved. Their political function is to divide people and hide class differences, keeping the majority's attention away from their own social and economic interests. So while many of us see the particular trees of abortion, God, guns, gays and Big Government, we miss the forest of the Class War.

In addition, the distraction of feigned accomodation to these individual group interests by the "opulent minority"-owned government provides the illusion that "something's being done" about abuses such as racism, sexism, joblessness, pollution, et al. Coupled with the division created by our intensifying individual struggles against those same abuses, the "opulent minority" gets to keep most of the wealth the majority of the people create for society, as groups - minorities, women, labor, greens, et al - focus on their individual agendas rather than the solidarity necessary to overcome entrenched, minority rule which allows the consistent redistribution of wealth "upward."

By the 80s it was obvious to anyone who connected the dots, that the Republicans dominated the government, that the Democrats had joined them in the Money Party, and that together they were wreaking havoc on all the groups they'd encouraged to practice Identity Politics. It was also obvious that the people themselves were becoming a problem, because they were, ostensibly, the government - federal, state and local - and therefore able to charge their elected representatives to work for the public good, just as the "opulent minority" was cementing its private, corporate dominance as embodied by Gordon Gekko.

In 1978, in *First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti*, their Supreme Court had declared that money is speech, and the "opulent minority" were becoming more vocal in their demands to, as Joe Bageant says, "Let the green stuff talk." A government of, by and for the people was an impediment to minority rule. It was counterproductive to have "an apparatus" (in place that was) "designed to implement the popular consensus about the management of the shared material interest of the citizenry." (24)

The very existence of a government whose purpose was to promote the general welfare by means of the popular will was anathema to the "opulent minority." They had no interest in markets and trade regulated by government (rigged, yes, regulated, no), nor the maintenance of public infrastructure, education, or healthcare. They saw no need for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, minimum wages, maximum hours, overtime, or unions.

The very thought of giving, or receiving, help was disgusting to them - unless they were the ones on the receiving end of tax abatements, loopholes, ridiculously low capital gains taxes, subsidies, exclusion from Social Security taxes, offshore banking, the elimination of tariffs on the goods they had made overseas, downsizing and outsourcing, illegal as well as legal (H-51) immigrant labor, waivers of environmental studies for dangerous extractive projects, over-the-counter trading, unlimited interest charges on credit (usury), sales taxes, flat taxes, right-to-work laws, all that green stuff talking its way into Congress via lobbyists and the insertion of their minions into positions of prominence in regulatory agencies themselves. All this on top their ownership of the corporate mechanism for accumulating and concentrating wealth, that they then translate into political power.

For the "opulent minority" the only excuse for a central government - besides funneling money to them - is police protection of their property and a military for "defense," e.g. opening up reluctant foreign markets to their predatory corporations. And so they promoted the "fact" that "government is not the solution to our problem: government is the problem." In effect, since the people are the government, the people are the problem.

The people were disowned by their own government.

"On the 20th of January, 1981, the new President of the United States was telling us that 'we the people' were in somebody's way, a somebody who actually was represented by the power and authority he now held, and which he intended to use to destroy the deposed government that was 'us.' ...Twenty-nine years and one day after Ronald Reagan came to power, the U.S. Supreme Court made it plain, by issuing its Dred Scott decision of the 21st century, elevating corporate rights above those of individual flesh-and-blood human beings. ...Yes, we, the people, are certainly in somebody's way," (25) so they've colonized our minds, cleansing them both intellectually and ethically. And today's method of social control is the direct descendent of the murderous and terroristic "management" of Native Americans, kidnapped Africans, and after the Civil War, of both poor whites and freed slaves via sharecropping, Jim Crow and right-to-work laws. Social control is all but "invisible" now, woven into the competitive consumption of the Consumer Bowl in today's economic and political class system.

"There is no subjugation so perfect as that which keeps the illusion of freedom, for in that way one captures volition itself." (26)

The "opulent minority" find their means to minority rule at the intersection of dumbed down and racism. They don't personally give a flying tea bag about color - except when it can be used to get more of the green stuff. Any color is okay with them as long as the minority comes wrapped in green. Our president, who I like to call "The Mask," performs his function as the overseer of our faux democracy perfectly, while taking the flak for the "opulent minority."

But in 1921 it was still okay to kill 300 of the more "common" sort of that minority to which the president belongs and pretend it never happened. It was also okay to lynch not only Blacks and Wobblies, but those even rumored to be Communists or union supporters. You could take your children to a lynching just like you can take them to Disneyland. There'd be body parts as souvenirs and postcards to send to like-minded friends who missed the party. In 1963 it was alright to murder four little girls in Sunday school and in 1964, to lynch three civil rights workers. You could bar students from the state university (1963) and forbid them to eat lunch - at a lunch counter (1960). And just like a bully in elementary school, you could make people sit at the back of the bus (1955). And this is still what it's all about, who has to sit in the back of the bus and who gets to drive.

And by using the dumbed down and ethically-cleansed to do the wet work, from the Civil War Era to the Civil Rights Era to today, the "opulent minority" picks one group to act as their pit bullies, whose only privilege is having the same skin tone as the plutocrats. They are encouraged to believe that their slightly higher-but-still-subsistence wages, and their ability to bankrupt themselves via usurious credit (in the richest country in the history of the world) makes them exceptional (exceptional dumbasses, maybe), and their clinging to the fact that at least, like the masters, they're white, simply proves that imitation is the sincerest form of depravity.

"...Big Government vs. the Common Folk, ignores the fact that only the government, the people, can referee the game of unlimited corporate power. So, by targeting government, not corporatism, the Tea Partiers serve essentially as 'faux populist' front-men for corporate interests..." (27)

And the Tea Party, after its now-forgotten snit over Wall Street bonuses, doesn't focus on a coherent, anti-corporate agenda, because until recently, corporate capitalism has been good to them, while it disadvantaged the groups they target today. The majority of Tea Partiers are older, wealthier, whiter men, most of whom still have jobs, and who harbor a kneejerk reaction to "income redistribution" - never mind the manipulated financial crises that redistributed income upward - both in 1929 and 2008. They fear any efforts toward a more equitable society will come out of their pockets. This subset of Identity Politics sees "equality, justice and tolerance as 'threats' to their alleged freedoms." (28) Like the Maginot Line, they're facing the wrong direction. The predator looms "above" them in the economic pecking order, not below them. But since they are authoritarians, they're afraid to stand up to those on the next highest level of the pecking order, let alone their corporate capitalist masters.

They also believe that their group is under attack and losing control, though they never really had it. Their wages levelled off in the 70s and it's harder than ever to get ahead when getting ahead means doing better than your parents did in a society where accumulation is the sole measure of success.

They see that some people seem to be making gains - Black, Hispanic, female, gay - no matter how small. It doesn't matter that these groups' position was formerly underfoot, "or that they haven't caught up ...in terms of income...or legal rights..." (29) (And there's actually only a highly visible fraction, like Oprah, Obama and Tiger that's outdistancing them.) The point is that "they're" moving ahead, even if only in some small way and these real American men are stuck in place or moving backward. And as each of us becomes more and more insignificant in the face of corporate power, these manly men have only maintained a sense of their own power, mirage that it is, by their place at the top of the dung heap of consumerism under the iron heel of corporate capitalism - which is all that makes Americans exceptional any more.

Their sense of lost privilege is what's brewing this tea. They don't want to understand that these groups of "others" they so resent are just bait, and that when they take the bait, focusing their anger and resentment on the lure of a corporate-sanctioned target group, they're biting like the fish the "opulent minority" are playing them for. They're just one more school of fish in the ocean of Identity Politics. They see the trees of the particular "enemy" and refuse to look at the forest, having accommodated their predators in exchange for a relatively comfortable gilded cage.

They allow themselves to be used as a human shield to protect the true source of their injury. And they allow their righteous anger at being wronged to fester as resentment and redirect it at the scapegoat du jour. By agreeing to this distraction, they fail to focus on the actual agent of their agony, and allow that agent to continue to injure them, thus the pain, the resentment and the hatred build to bursting. And hatred is another distraction. It strengthens the power of the oppressor over both the injured and the scapegoat. What we experience as inequality is a manifestation of this manipulation, because "...the power and wealth of the minority, in fact, depends on increasing the exploitation of the majority." (30)

A lot of Tea Partiers believe it's the scapegoats they resent. But besides their free-floating anger at Big Government, liberals and socialists, what they really resent is ..."the idea that democracy is to rule and to be ruled in turns. They do not want that kind of society. They see a world where they are right and that is it. ... This is not the idea on which the United States was founded." (31)

Tea Partiers are encouraged to see immigrants as job-stealing, wage-lowering, social welfare program-using criminals in order to divert their anger from the corporate system. This is the same system that downsized and outsourced their American Dream via "free" trade agreements like NAFTA, the encouragement of both illegal and legal immigration, and the slashing of wages and living standards across the board in order to boost corporate profits. Their anger and resentment are kept alive and magnified by incessant repetition in the media. It's the secret of American working class impotence and the secret the "opulent minority" of corporate shareholders uses to maintain power. It's class war. And the winning class knows exactly what it's doing. Robber Baron Jay Gould put it in a nutshell. "I can get one half of the working class to kill the other half."

But somewhere under all the bluster, bombast and bullying these usable-husks-of-humanity realize they've taken a wrong turn. Most of them call themselves Christian, and some even go so far as to carry signs proclaiming they're "Teabagging for Jesus." They know, if they read their bibles, that the one quote their masters use, "the poor will always be with you" is used to justify whatever is done to the poor. They also know that there are 214 verses quoting Jesus' love for and defense of the poor, which have been disappeared like Guatemala's and Iran's democracies in 1953 in the service of US corporate pharisees. They know, too, that Jesus stood up for the poor and got crucified for it. And they prefer capitulation to the pharisees to crucifixion, especially if there's just a hint of the green stuff, or its red-headed stepchild, credit, attached to it. (WHOSE ARTICLE IS THIS FROM?)

Americans used to read - and write - as evidenced by the letters written by "common" Civil War soldiers. We used to be able to deal with complex problems and see through illusions to the truth. We used to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. But many of us no longer have those skills, and as a result are completely detached from reality. We can't tell truth from lies, think for ourselves or come to our own conclusions. And we get lots of help to stay that way. The information we receive from corporate media outlets is a series of dumbed-down, simplified stories, full of trite themes conveyed by images and set off by a veritable spinmeister's treasure trove of gossip, talking points, public relations, screaming matches, framing, scamming, lies of omission and propaganda.

"Never allow the public to cool off; never admit a fault or a wrong; never concede there may be some good in your enemy; never leave room for alternatives; never accept blame; concentrate on one enemy at a time and blame him for everything that goes wrong; people will believe a big lie sooner than a little one; and if you repeat it frequently enough people will sooner or later believe it." (32)

Americans are caught like deer in headlights any time they're confronted with ambiguity or nuance. But then we no longer need to think. Our moods, emotions and impulses are manipulated, most often on a subliminal level, by elaborate psy ops that work automatically on people living a style without substance, devoid of content, context, history or reality. In fact, we prefer illusions to reality, and that makes us suckers for images and slogans, the branding by which we have come to understand the world. And we mistake our manipulated feelings for knowledge.

"Ours must be a leadership democracy administered by an intelligent minority who know how to regiment and guide the masses. The voice of the people expresses the mind of the people, and that mind is made up for it by the group leaders in whom it believes and by those persons who understand the manipulation of public opinion...If we understand the mechanism and motives of the group mind, it is now possible to control and regiment the masses according to our will without their knowing it." (33)

We want entertainment, not information, instant gratification, not the truth. We feel comforted when we are indulged with familiar stereotypes and flattered by tales of American exceptionalism "that tell us...we live in the greatest country on Earth, that we are...superior...because" of our American values and/or that God blesses America. The repetition of such "simple, childish lies...gives them the aura of... truth." (34)

Manifest Destiny. We're Number One. Yes we can. Change you can believe in. Green Revolution. Pro-life. War on Poverty. War on Drugs. Ownership Society. War on Terror. With us or against us. Support the troops. Love it or leave it. Pry my gun from my cold, dead hands.

It was George W. Bush who said "See in my line of work you got to keep repeating things over and over again for the truth to sink in, to kind of catapult the propaganda."

"Everyone has a right to a great SUV." KIA Sportage "Ameriquist Mortgage - Proud sponsor of the American Dream" "Chevrolet. An American Revolution." "Be the boss. Choose your sauce." Kentucky Fried Chicken.

In the United States, the land of the free, freedom is consolidating your credit card payments. In the country that declared its independence in 1776 with a revolutionary war, revolution means choosing the correct new fossil fuel-burning vehicle. Rebellion is symbolized by T-shirts declaring "FCUK." How clever. How daring. Purchased from a corporation out to make money on our "rebellion." How conventional is our unconvention.

President Dwight Eisenhower suggested that "...dictatorial systems make one contribution to their people which leads" those who desire nothing more than insulation from the pressures of a free society "...to support such systems - freedom from the necessity of informing themselves and making up their own minds..." (35)

"Liberty is often a heavy burden on a man. It involves the necessity of perpetual choice which is the kind of labor men have always dreaded." (36)

We've become an image-based, rather than a literate, society. But pictures and bumper sticker philosophies convey neither nuance nor context, wherein lie the difficult decisions of morality. We're unequipped to search for the truth or deal rationally with snowballing social and economic crises, so we search for security, certainty and order. And we're willing to use force to get it. And to force others to accept our version of it, especially anyone who looks, speaks or thinks differently. Democracy is useless to people who can't use its tools.

"Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people." (37)

A democratic and open society requires that we think for ourselves and come to our own conclusions, that we understand history, science and the difference between truth and lies. It also requires that we accept the fact that there are other ways to be besides our way. These abilities are becoming extinct. They have all but have faded from view, like the oasis of democracy itself, merely a mirage manufactured as bait by the "opulent minority" and used as the front for its machinations.

And to this end, each of us was once "...encouraged to want to be king. 'Success' was measured by how close you came to fulfilling this kingly ambition. The 'aristocracy' ('rule by the best,' meaning the wealthiest) came to rule over mankind, with each man giving his consent to the arrangement. The cultivated desire to live like kings is the glue that bound the kingdom together, becoming the basis of the capitalist system.

The 'aristocrats' were a minority of individuals possessed of the desire to dominate and control all things within their grasp. And "...In order for the system to function, the majority" had to be equally "as willing to submit to the economic domination of the" "opulent minority" as the "opulent minority" were "determined to dominate them." (38)

Corporate capitalism has always sought to stamp out our ability to make the important choices, both personal, and as a people. The "opulent minority" wants to make the important choices - like who gets what and how much. We, however, are "free" to choose from among nutritionless foodlike products, manly spectator sports and gas-guzzling vehicles, or elective plastic surgery and color-coordinated fingertip powder room towels. The fruit of this particular tree is selfish, consumer sadism, and contempt for those who can't compete in the Consumer Bowl - the poor, the jobless, the ill and the disabled.

"The best index of a person's character is a) how he treats people who can't do him any good, and b) how he treats people who can't fight back." (39) And still, the "opulent minority" pretends not to know that there's no honor in taking advantage when you already have it.

We have been brainwashed into believing that there is no alternative. But we can refuse to use. Or to be used. We can refuse to kill. Or to be killed. It is exactly this capacity for independent choice based on individual conscience, that little voice which knows right from wrong, that corporate capitalism seeks to destroy.

But in order to hear that little voice, we need to be able to connect the dots of all the particular trees and see them for the forest of corporate capitalism's systemic oppression and exploitation that they are - which is necessary for its perpetuation. And making that connection is the only path to a meaningful life and personal freedom. As "Augustine wrote, hope has two beautiful daughters, anger and courage - anger at the way things are and the courage to see that they do not remain the way they are." (40)

And as they rape democracy while draped in the flag, the repulsive modus operandi of the "opulent minority" is imploding on itself like the World Trade Center. Their fraud and corruption, exposed in the stark reality between their words and our lives, becomes more and more sickeningly apparent. The rage rising across the country will force them to employ even more aggressive forms of corporate power, doing away with the artifice and seduction of consumer society, opting for naked repression.

"The illusion of freedom will continue as long as it's profitable to continue the illusion. At the point where the illusion becomes too expensive to maintain, they will just take down the scenery, pull back the curtains, and you will see the brick wall at the back of the theater." (41)

The things that threaten minority rule via the corporate way of profit are exactly the tools of democracy for daily use that will break the empathy-proof outer shells of our corporate-purchased avatars/vehicles so we can speak driver-to-driver, no longer passengers relegated to the back of corporate capitalism's bus driven by the interests of the "opulent minority."

We can de-atomize the individual pain being inflicted on us by making the big picture visible, connecting the dots, seeing past the trees of the particular to the forest of class war by tracing its origin to the system of institutionalized inequality built on these trees - racism, sexism, agism, homophobia, xenophobia, religious fanaticism, economic or educational status, ideology, et al - in order to create it.

To make that forest visible we have to break the capitalist commandment to keep the personal separate from the societal and stop thinking of ourselves as John Wayne-Robinson Crusoe clones each one of us alone on an island with no one and nothing to relate to except our personal, material possessions and the personal responsibility for our resulting alienation, pain and depression, but not the responsibility for making any of the important choices which might alleviate that corporate-created pain and oppression. When you allow yourself to be isolated, the predator has the advantage and you become prey.

"What's wrong with this picture? 1) Less than one half of a percent of the total US population are passive claimants of economic wealth, who are also the most active daily participants in the democratic process. 2) The rest of us tend to be active daily participants in generating economic wealth, but we are also the most passive observers in the democratic process. We, the people, consent to this crippling arrangement every single day when we get out of bed and got to work and hand over most of the value (power) we produce to passive ownership." (42) (emphasis added)

The democratic process has to become an integral part of daily living in order to correct this imbalance because...

"...So long as the people do not care to exercise their freedom, those who wish to tyrannize will do so; for tyrants are active and ardent, and will devote themselves in the name of any number of gods, religious or otherwise, to put shackles upon sleeping men." (43) and... "He who does not know history is destined to remain a child." (44) subordinate by definition.

"Perhaps the claims of ideological purity and consistency on the part of the status quo's elite are mere marketing. Perhaps the members of this elite are committed to no ideology at all. Perhaps all they care about is their own self-interest. Perhaps they will espouse any position at all if they believe it will be profitable. Perhaps they are the proverbial progeny of Cain and the mark they bear is a capital S with a vertical line drawn through its center." (45)

Is this, finally, what it means to be king?

It always was, always will be and will always remains the same - unless the people stand together and fight for each other, not with each other. Everybody in. Nobody out. Because "if we do not hang together, will we most assuredly hang separately." (46)

"Enough is enough! ... For those who believe in freedom, the revolution calls you. For those who hate freedom for others, the revolution awaits you." (47)

"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible, make violent revolution inevitable." (48)

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Giordano Bruno: The New American: A Rebirth Of The Old Guard

The New American: A Rebirth Of The Old Guard

by Giordano Bruno [article link](#)

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People no longer believe in the existence of heroes. By heroes, I do not mean synthetic pop culture icons and sports stars, or mass media generated two faced chimera politicians. I do not mean those fraudulent public figures and false idols which are thrust into the establishment limelight and into our collective faces everyday. By heroes, I mean those ordinary men and women throughout the ages who stood firm against extraordinary corruption and overwhelming social evil. I mean those who had the will to risk everything for truth and an honorable tomorrow, often receiving no recognition for their sacrifice. Today, such heroes are considered a distant memory, a mythology from days long since drowned in the tides of history. How we yearn for those tides to turn...

In our modern era, the shadow of elitism appears to have cast across the whole of the world and permeated every facet of this culture. Many Americans have become so overwhelmed in the face of such unrelenting and widespread government and corporate criminality that they have collapsed in on themselves, hiding behind cynicism, narcissism, and nihilism. They see the horrors of modern life as some disturbed comedy designed for their entertainment. They escape into fantasy worlds and chemical dependency in order to numb the shame they feel, the crushing inadequacy of being unable or unwilling to determine their own destiny. They feel like ghosts, hovering through life as insignificant wisps of vapor. Deep down, they know they have failed themselves, but still, they blame everyone else.

However, for every negative force that exists in nature, in physics, and in the psychology of the human mind, there always arises a positive and opposing strength. It is an undeniable law of the universe. I believe it has taken so long for men to rally against the evils of elitism because the elites have taken special care in making sure they could not be easily defined. They have hidden behind organizations, political parties, and money, for decades if not centuries. Good people cannot fight back against an enemy they cannot clearly see, and heroes cannot rise to occasion against an opponent that has no face and no name. Thanks to the efforts of the Liberty Movement, though, the obscurity of elitists and globalists has come to an end, and we now know who the true enemy is.

The next step requires the reformation of the defenders of old. The reinstitution of legitimate American stewardship, founded by the Constitutionals and free thinkers at the birth of this country. Though there is much to fear in the path our society has recently taken, even now I see a return to clarity and principle. Even now, I can see the rebirth of the Old American Guard.

In this article, we will examine just some of the qualities that distinguish these men and women...

Fighting For Truth In An Age Of Lies

When men first hear the truth of a thing, the unfiltered unfettered truth, their most common and predictable reaction is invariably one of disbelief. A wise man, or even a moderately intelligent one, would expect that new truths will arise from the ashes of dead notions. They would expect that there are vast reaches of knowledge in this world we have yet to tap, and that every once in a while, our previous assumptions on life will be dashed against the rocky shores of reality. However, most people in today's culture of mental and philosophical "leisure" are not intuitively wise, and in some cases their ability to rationally observe any situation is highly questionable. The truth, for them, is less like an inspirational moment of empowerment, and more like a blood curdling shark attack. For those with a narrow and manipulated world view, the truth is a terrifying threat.

Often, human beings tend to classify truth through "repetition", instead of through objective observation and evidence. What this means is, we tend to assume that the viewpoint we hear the most everyday must be the correct view, regardless of whether or not it is supported by tangible fact. When new information, correct information based on solid data, breaks into

the light of day, those who base their entire world view on repetition will be left in the dust, wondering how everything could change right under their noses. Sometimes, these people cling to their once widely accepted presumptions for the rest of their lives. For them, the Earth is flat forever.

What we have seen in the past decade or so, though, is a great movement towards embracing the truth despite the wailing of the now dying mainstream. Millions of Americans are turning off their televisions and actively seeking out information for themselves through alternative sources outside the influence of corporate globalists. In the "New America" (which is really just the return of the old America), the proliferation of disinformation is UNACCEPTABLE, and will no longer be tolerated. Guardians today are those people who have chosen to stand against our cultural misconceptions and propaganda, facing ridicule, censorship, and even physical harm. They tear into the great lie like attack dogs locking their jaws and never letting go, they are shaken about and beaten and yet they still hold on, until finally, the lie exhausts itself, and fades away. The New American has rediscovered the perseverance of his forebears, and the will to endure.

If this is to continue, the ideal of transparency in government must be instituted as strict social policy, and the pursuit of the truth must be ingrained into our national consciousness. A respect for self awareness, individuality, and personal honesty, must become the foundation of our civilization. The current system, which makes paths for the dishonest, cradles the vicious, coddles the weak spirited, and rewards those who lack conscience, must be cut away. It is up to the New American to do this.

True Patriots vs Fake Nationalists

Patriotism is a highly abused and misappropriated term. The exploitation of the methodology is evident in the propaganda of the Neo-Conservative movement (an elitist construct), especially during George W. Bush's two terms in office. Interestingly, it has been real conservatives, as opposed to neo-cons, which have now sought to rebalance and reintroduce the concept of patriotism once again. The internal conflict of the Republican Party at this time, between the rising Liberty Movement and the falling Neo-Cons, illustrates the true nature of patriotism well.

In the past, we have been wrongly instructed to treat patriotism as a political weapon, a tool for shaming those who question the status quo. We have been taught that to be patriotic, one must become blindly nationalistic. This is not what the founders intended. A country is nothing without principles. A government that does not represent the root standards and principles of the country they are meant to lead is not a government that we the people are meant to follow. A nationalist ignorantly places government on a pedestal as the symbol of a people; a patriot places the solid founding principles of his nation above all else and dismantles any government that does not. A patriot demands that government adhere to the will of the people. A nationalist demands that people adhere to the will of government.

The New Americans, taking the torch from the old guard, are putting the manipulation of patriotism to an end. We are no longer allowing the establishment to define our beliefs for us, and are forcing them to either adopt the Constitutionalist methods which originated this country, or to relinquish their power. No longer will we be fooled into associating the twisted philosophies of a corrupt government with our own national identity.

No Fear, No Regrets

The New American answers to no one but his own conscience. All other directives are secondary. Because of this way of life, he rarely has any reason to regret any decision he has ever made.

He does not pander at his workplace. He is never a yes-man or a leech. Nowhere is he a servant. He is a person that demands to be treated with the same respect he gives, and openly gives respect where it is deserved. In his daily life, he absolutely refuses to follow the herd. The cesspool of groupthink is abhorrent to him, and fake people hiding behind two dimensional personas make him physically ill. Bullies and people with an outrageous sense of entitlement need a good punch in the mouth, not a turn of the cheek, and the New American looks forward to the day when it is once again socially acceptable to hand thugs and weasels their own derriere in a paper sack.

The New American has abandoned the false left / right paradigm in U.S. politics. He understands that the leadership of both major parties, Democrat and Republican, have the exact same goals and support nearly identical legislation. Their purpose is to give us the illusion of choice, and to consolidate and centralize power and dissolve the sovereignty of the U.S. Their openly stated objective is to force Americans to accept a global economy and global governance, virtually erasing our Constitutional freedoms and any ability we may have left to participate in the political process. The New American has set out to overtake and reclaim the Republican Party from globalists, and to use it as a tool in support of limited government and individual liberty once again.

For the New American, authority is derived from experience and earned respect. Petty authority derived from corruption is to be either laughed at or scorned. For instance, a policeman or politician that does not follow or understand Constitutional Law is a liability to society, not an authority, and as such, does not deserve respect. The New American is not impressed by uniforms, titles, expensive Ivy League degrees, old money, celebrities, or pop culture fluff. To him, the people who ARE impressed with these things are rather repulsive. To get his attention, you need to have an honorable reputation, legitimate intelligence, and, for heaven's sake, a backbone.

Gullibility in others is only endured to a point. Knowledge, self knowledge and an understanding of ones surroundings, is paramount. The New American has seen too many catastrophes transpire because of the complicity of morons. The ignorant have a tendency to threaten not just themselves but also those around them. Their stupidity makes them malleable and easily influenced by those who seek power. They become unwitting accomplices in tyranny. The willfully uneducated are the second most dangerous people on Earth.

The primary threat, not just to the New American but to every living person, is Elitism. There is nothing more vile than an elitist: they demand fealty from the masses even though they hate and despise the common man. They are fully aware of their conscience, but see it as a hindrance to their pursuit of dominance and so ignore it. They fancy themselves as "godlike" and imagine themselves to be intellectually superior to the rest of us, even though they have proven on numerous occasions to be rather foolish. Their ego-mania is so immense that they are virtually incapable of recognizing the fallibility of their philosophies. And, they are willing to sacrifice anything and anyone accept themselves to get what they want, meaning they are the worst kind of cowards exacting the worst kind of oppression.

As horrifying as elites are, the New American is unphased. He knows that an uncompromising sense of despotism can only be met with an uncompromising sense of liberty. He knows that because he is confident in his values and refuses to negotiate them away, elitists fear him. They recognize that men who are defending their home, who are wise, who hold the moral high ground, and who are unafraid, are difficult if nearly impossible to defeat. More than anything else, the elites quake at the thought of the New American Guard.

The Return Of Freedom's Protectors

It is in the worst of times that the best of men make their presence known. Some of them have felt for most of their lives that they were meant to make a difference, to sway the flow of events towards a greater purpose, a better future. Some have yet to realize their latent potential. Many of these men play unassuming roles in their normal lives. Carpenters and clerks, factory workers and investors, farmers and soldiers, it is always the seemingly inconspicuous that surprise us when the nightmare falls. The counterfeit champions, those the public once invested all of their faith in, quickly turn and run, while the true defenders stand unyielding against the coming tempest. They are the old men of the mountain, weathered by the storm, but unshakable in their resolve. Not simply warriors, but also scholars and social healers. They are modern-day Paladins in the most brutal of epochs.

There are two kinds of people in this world; history makers, and spectators. Spectators allow the throes of events to propel them wherever they may. They wait for the crosswinds of fate to determine their final home, their final occupation, their final resting place. During great upheaval, these are the people who fall by the wayside of time, whose children despair in the wake of their parent's failure. These are the people upon which the elite feed.

History makers are defined by a beautifully simple decision; the decision to participate in the making of their own providence. The decision to actually live, instead of playing at life. True history makers are often not chronicled in books.

Their tales are often not told for posterity. But none of this matters. What matters, is the contribution they make to the good in all of us, the tremors they send through the underlying foundations of humanity. Their presence is felt, even if their names are not known. By this measure, the New Americans will definitely make history.

The responsibility that lay ahead of us is daunting. While a global awakening is certainly taking place, the epicenter is right here in our own backyard. All eyes will be watching us and waiting. The world is relying on us to make a stand, to prove that the fight is far from over. If we do not, then everything is lost, not just for ourselves, but for every generation after we are gone. No matter what obstacles the elites unleash, be it nuclear disaster, economic collapse, or yet another war, we must not falter. The world is waiting. They are waiting for heroes. They are waiting for the old guard to return.

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Wednesday, July 28, 2010

Joel S. Hirschhorn: Beware of America's Rich Political Saviors

Billionaires Run for the US Congress: Beware of America's Rich Political Saviors

by Joel S. Hirschhorn [article link](#)

July 28, 2010 | Global Research

Consumer confidence is terrible; citizen confidence is worse: Only 11 percent of Americans have confidence in Congress. No surprise there is record-setting anti-incumbency anger rampant among Americans. But the sad truth is damned if you do and damned if you don't vote for incumbents.

The problem is that the reformers, populist outsiders, tea party candidates, surprise primary winners and others expecting to oust incumbents in the coming mid-term elections for members of Congress and state governors and other officials mostly suck. Why? They are nutty, ignorant, dishonest or racist.

Pathetic US Senate candidates like Alvin Greene on the left in South Carolina and Sharron Angle on the right in Nevada , for example, are intellectual nits and an insult to a once envied political system. And in Memphis , Tennessee Willie Herenton, who is African-American, sells black racism to oust two-term incumbent Congressman Steve Cohen in a primary, telling blacks to not vote for his white opponent.

Many ambitious candidates drained the economy to become super-rich. Is this any time to trust people who have taken advantage of our corrupt corporate system to run the government and serve those they have previously taken advantage of for personal gain? Will anger about the corrupt, dysfunctional government system be sufficient for voters to turn the government over to people who have nothing in common with most Americans?

Consider California. Meg Whitman, a Republican candidate for governor wants to beat the familiar, incumbent-like Democrat Jerry Brown, now attorney general, and was previously the chief executive of eBay. She has outspent all other

self-financed candidates across the country by using \$91 million of her own money to knock out Steve Poizner, who spent \$24 million of his own money, in the Republican primary. California is big, but \$91 million and likely even more!! She will greatly outspend Brown. And Carly Fiorina, a Republican who is challenging Democrat Senator Barbara Boxer in California, has the audacity to claim on her website that she will “fight for every job” if elected even though, as chief executive of Hewlett-Packard in 2003 she cut about 18,000 jobs and did little good for the company. She has already spent \$5 million. Are these people worthy of public support?

Consider Florida Republican Rick Scott, the former head of Columbia/HCA Healthcare — an awful large hospital chain that paid \$1.7 billion in fines for fraudulently billing government programs like Medicare — has become the front-runner for Florida governor. He supposedly is worth about \$200 million. He was ousted by his own board of directors in 1997 amid the nation's biggest health care fraud scandal. He loaned his campaign \$22.9 million during the period from April 9 through July 16 and spent \$22.65 million of it. In contrast, he received only \$415,126 in contributions. Bill McCollum, his Republican opponent, raised a little over \$1 million during the reporting period and spent about \$1.7 million. He has raised \$5.7 million since he announced his campaign last year. He has less than \$500,000 left. Democrat candidate Alex Sink, with no primary opponent, raised \$1.1 million for the reporting period and has raised \$7.3 million so far. Is Scott better qualified because of his wealth and ability to advertise more?

Also in Florida is Jeff Greene who wants to be US Senator, a Democrat who had been a Republican with a strange gang of friends like Mike Tyson and Heidi Fleiss. Incredibly, most of his fortune, estimated at \$1.4 billion, came from derivatives that let him profit from the collapse of subprime mortgages which helped tank the US economy. He lives in an oceanfront mansion when he is not on one of his yachts or his plane with gold seat-belt buckles. He recently reported taking a paltry \$3,036 in outside contributions, while lending himself — and spending — \$5.9 million in the second quarter. Recent polls found Greene roughly even in the primary with Democrat Representative Kendrick B. Meek, who had been the party favorite and took 18 months to raise a similar amount. Incumbent-like candidate Governor Charlie Crist still leads as an independent in a three-way general election. Greene boasts that now is the moment for self-financed candidates. “If 2008 was the year of change, 2010 is the year of frustration,” he said. But does frustration justify voting for these characters?

And then there is Linda E. McMahon, a Connecticut Republican who made her fortune in professional wrestling before her Senate run. She has stated a willingness to spend \$50 million of her own money to win the election, a lot of money for such a small state, and has already spent \$21.5 million. A television ad declares “politicians have had their chance, and blown it” while her jobs plan “is backed by experience.” She became president of the WWF as a legal maneuver to save the company in 1993, because her husband was indicted for distributing steroids to his wrestlers. Cleverly, she blew the whistle and told regulators something few in the industry would admit: wrestling matches were scripted shows and not athletic competitions that required the kind of oversight that, say, boxing required. The financial benefit was that her wrestling business operates in 29 states without supervision by state athletic boards or commissions, saving the company licensing fees. She served only a few months on the state Board of Education and then became a candidate. She supports policies that favor the rich and advocates offshore oil drilling. She faces Democrat incumbent-like Richard Blumenthal, now attorney general of Connecticut. Is her wrestling business experience really the basis for being a great senator?

Voters should remember this: None of these characters are legitimate populists, progressives or reformers with a political record to show their true capabilities or positions. Why trust them? Would they perform better than incumbents? I don't think so. More likely, they would serve elites and corporate interests. In the past very few rich candidates have won office (just 11 percent), but considering the anti-incumbency sentiment this year, big money may prevail.

Is the evil you don't know really better than the evil you do know because of failed government experience? Are some incumbents worth support? Or will many Americans admit that voting no longer can fix and reform our battered democracy and stay home? I think I will. There are just too many fools and idiots voting that offset the votes of informed and intelligent citizens. Maybe if voter turnout was totally abysmal, say 20 percent, maybe then we would get the reforms or revolution we need by de-legitimizing our delusional democracy.

Joel S. Hirschhorn is a frequent contributor to Global Research. Contact Joel S. Hirschhorn through delusionaldemocracy.com.

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Paul Craig Roberts: The Obama Regime Has Made War the Business of America

The US Treasury Running on Fumes:

The Obama regime has made War the Business of America

Down to the last trillion in red ink

by Paul Craig Roberts [article link](#)

July 28, 2010 | Global Research

The White House is screaming like a stuck pig. WikiLeaks' release of the Afghan War Documents "puts the lives of our soldiers and our coalition partners at risk."

What nonsense. Obama's war puts the lives of American soldiers at risk, and the craven puppet state behavior of "our partners" in serving as US mercenaries is what puts their troops at risk.

Keep in mind that it was someone in the US military that leaked the documents to WikiLeaks. This means that there is a spark of rebellion within the Empire itself.

And rightly so. The leaked documents show that the US has committed numerous war crimes and that the US government and military have lied through their teeth in order to cover up the failure of their policies. These are the revelations that Washington wants to keep secret.

If Obama cared about the lives of our soldiers, he would not have sent them to a war, the purpose of which he cannot identify. Earlier in his regime, Obama admitted that he did not know what the mission was in Afghanistan. He vowed to find out what the mission was and to tell us, but he never did. After being read the riot act by the military/security complex, which recycles war profits into political campaign contributions, Obama simply declared the war to be "necessary." No one has ever explained why the war is necessary.

The government cannot explain why the war is necessary, because it is not necessary to the American people. Any necessary reason for the war has to do with the enrichment of narrow private interests and with undeclared agendas. If the agendas were declared and the private interests being served identified, even the American sheeple might revolt.

The Obama regime has made war the business of America. Escalation in Afghanistan has gone hand in hand with drone attacks on Pakistan and the use of proxy forces to conduct wars in Pakistan and North Africa. Currently, the US is conducting provocative naval exercises off the coasts of China and North Korea and instigating war between Columbia and Venezuela in South America. Former CIA director Michael Hayden declared on July 25 that an attack on Iran seems unavoidable.

With the print and TV media captive, why doesn't Washington simply tell us that the country is at war without going to the trouble of war? That way the munitions industry can lay off its workers and put the military appropriations directly into profits. We could avoid the war crimes and wasted lives of our soldiers.

The US economy and the well-being of Americans are being sacrificed to the regime's wars. The states are broke and laying off teachers.

Even "rich" California, formerly touted as "the seventh largest economy in the world," is reduced to issuing script and cutting its state workers' pay to the minimum wage.

Supplemental war appropriations have become routine affairs, but the budget deficit is invoked to block any aid to Americans--but not to Israel. On July 25 the Israeli newspaper, Haaretz, reported that the US and Israel had signed a multi-billion dollar deal for Boeing to provide Israel with a missile system.

Americans can get no help out of Washington, but the US ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, declared that Washington's commitment to Israel's security is "not negotiable." Washington's commitment to California and to the security of the rest of us is negotiable. War spending has run up the budget deficit, and the deficit precludes any help for Americans.

With the US bankrupting itself in wars, America's largest creditor, China, has taken issue with America's credit rating. The head of China's largest credit rating agency declared: "The US is insolvent and faces bankruptcy as a pure debtor nation."

On July 12, Niall Ferguson, an historian of empire, warned that the American empire could collapse suddenly from weakness brought on by its massive debts and that such a collapse could be closer than we think.

Deaf, dumb, and blind, Washington policymakers prattle on about "thirty more years of war."

Paul Craig Roberts is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

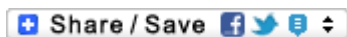
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Could Wikileaks Offer A Way Out of War?

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WikiLeaks' Afghan War Diary

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Tuesday, July 27, 2010

Paul Craig Roberts: The Year America Dissolved

When Globalism Runs Its Course ...

The Year America Dissolved

by Paul Craig Roberts [article link](#) [article link](#)
July 27, 2010 | CounterPunch | Global Research

It was 2017. Clans were governing America.

The first clans organized around local police forces. The conservatives' war on crime during the late 20th century and the Bush/Obama war on terror during the first decade of the 21st century had resulted in the police becoming militarized and unaccountable.

As society broke down, the police became warlords. The state police broke apart, and the officers were subsumed into the local forces of their communities. The newly formed tribes expanded to encompass the relatives and friends of the police.

The dollar had collapsed as world reserve currency in 2012 when the worsening economic depression made it clear to Washington's creditors that the federal budget deficit was too large to be financed except by the printing of money.

With the dollar's demise, import prices skyrocketed. As Americans were unable to afford foreign-made goods, the transnational corporations that were producing offshore for US markets were bankrupted, further eroding the government's revenue base.

The government was forced to print money in order to pay its bills, causing domestic prices to rise rapidly. Faced with hyperinflation, Washington took recourse in terminating Social Security and Medicare and followed up by confiscating the remnants of private pensions. This provided a one-year respite, but with no more resources to confiscate, money creation and hyperinflation resumed.

Organized food deliveries broke down when the government fought hyperinflation with fixed prices and the mandate that all purchases and sales had to be in US paper currency. Unwilling to trade appreciating goods for depreciating paper, goods disappeared from stores.

Washington responded as Lenin had done during the "war communism" period of Soviet history. The government sent troops to confiscate goods for distribution in kind to the population. This was a temporary stop-gap until existing stocks were depleted, as future production was discouraged. Much of the confiscated stocks became the property of the troops who seized the goods.

Goods reappeared in markets under the protection of local warlords. Transactions were conducted in barter and in gold, silver, and copper coins.

Other clans organized around families and individuals who possessed stocks of food, bullion, guns and ammunition. Uneasy alliances formed to balance differences in clan strengths. Betrayals quickly made loyalty a necessary trait for survival.

Large scale food and other production broke down as local militias taxed distribution as goods moved across local territories. Washington seized domestic oil production and refineries, but much of the government's gasoline was paid for safe passage across clan territories.

Most of the troops in Washington's overseas bases were abandoned. As their resource stocks were drawn down, the abandoned soldiers were forced into alliances with those with whom they had been fighting.

Washington found it increasingly difficult to maintain itself. As it lost control over the country, Washington was less able to secure supplies from abroad as tribute from those Washington threatened with nuclear attack. Gradually other nuclear powers realized that the only target in America was Washington. The more astute saw the writing on the wall and slipped away from the former capital city.

When Rome began her empire, Rome's currency consisted of gold and silver coinage. Rome was well organized with efficient institutions and the ability to supply troops in the field so that campaigns could continue indefinitely, a monopoly in the world of Rome's time.

When hubris sent America in pursuit of overseas empire, the venture coincided with the offshoring of American manufacturing, industrial, and professional service jobs and the corresponding erosion of the government's tax base, with the advent of massive budget and trade deficits, with the erosion of the fiat paper currency's value, and with America's dependence on foreign creditors and puppet rulers.

The Roman Empire lasted for centuries. The American one collapsed overnight.

Rome's corruption became the strength of her enemies, and the Western Empire was overrun.

America's collapse occurred when government ceased to represent the people and became the instrument of a private oligarchy. Decisions were made in behalf of short-term profits for the few at the expense of unmanageable liabilities for the many. Overwhelmed by liabilities, the government collapsed.

Globalism had run its course. Life reformed on a local basis.

Paul Craig Roberts was an editor of the Wall Street Journal and an Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Treasury. His latest book, [HOW THE ECONOMY WAS LOST](#), has just been published by CounterPunch/AK Press. He can be reached at: PaulCraigRoberts@yahoo.com

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Surviving Economic Collapse: Tips, Tactics, And Gear

by Giordano Bruno [article link](#)

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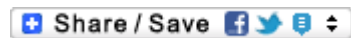
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Gareth Porter: The Afghan War Springs a Leak

Fatal Contradictions

The Afghan War Springs a Leak

By Gareth Porter [article link](#)

July 27, 2010 | CounterPunch

The 92,000 reports on the war in Afghanistan made public by the whistleblower organisation WikiLeaks, and reported Monday by [The Guardian](#), [The New York Times](#) and [Der Spiegel](#), offer no major revelations that are entirely new, as did the Pentagon Papers to which they are inevitably being compared.

But they increase the political pressure on a war policy that has already suffered a precipitous loss of credibility this year by highlighting contradictions between the official assumptions of the strategy and the realities shown in the documents - especially in regard to Pakistan's role in the war.

Unlike the Pentagon Papers, which chronicle the policymaking process leading up to and during the Vietnam War, the WikiLeaks documents chronicle thousands of local incidents and situations encountered by U.S. and other NATO troops that illustrate chronic problems for the U.S.-NATO effort.

Among the themes that are documented, sometimes dramatically but often through bland military reports, are the seemingly casual killing of civilians away from combat situations, night raids by special forces that are often based on bad intelligence, the absence of legal constraints on the abuses of Afghan police, and the deeply rooted character of corruption among Afghan officials.

The most politically salient issue highlighted by the new documents, however, is Pakistan's political and material support for the Taliban insurgency, despite its ostensible support for U.S. policy in Afghanistan.

The documents include many intelligence reports about Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul, the director of the ISI, Pakistan's military intelligence agency, in the late 1980s, continuing to work with the Taliban commanders loyal to Mullah Omar as well as the Jalaluddin Haqqani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar insurgent networks.

Some of the reports obviously reflect the anti-Pakistan bias of the Afghan intelligence service when it was under former Northern Alliance intelligence chief Amrullah Saleh. Nevertheless, the overall impression they convey of Pakistani support for the Taliban is credible to the news media, because they confirm numerous press reports over the past few years.

The New York Times led its coverage of the documents with its report on the Pakistani-Taliban issue. The story said the documents reflect "deep suspicions among American officials that Pakistan's military spy service has for years guided the Afghan insurgency with a hidden hand, even as Pakistan receives more than 1 billion dollars a year from Washington for its help combating the militants."

The issue of Pakistani "double-dealing" on Afghanistan is one of the Barack Obama administration's greatest political vulnerabilities, because it bears on a point of particular political sensitivity among the political and national security elite who are worried about whether there is any hope for success for the war strategy, even with Gen. David Petraeus in command.

One Democratic opponent of the war policy was quick to take advantage of the leaked documents' focus on Pakistan's support for the Taliban. In a statement issued Monday, Sen. Russ Feingold, Democratic member of the Foreign Relations Committee, said the documents "highlight a fundamental strategic problem, which is that elements of the Pakistani security services have been complicit in the insurgency".

In combination with "competing agendas within the Afghan security forces", Feingold argued, that problem precludes any "military solution in Afghanistan".

Afghan President Hamid Karzai took advantage of the new story generated by the documents to release a statement pointing to Pakistani sanctuaries across the border as the primary problem faced by his government. "Our efforts against terrorism will have no effect as long as these sanctuaries and sources remain intact," said Karzai.

Last February, then Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair said what administration officials had privately conceded. Disrupting the "safe havens" enjoyed by the Taliban on the Pakistani side of the border, he said, "won't be sufficient by itself to defeat the insurgency in Afghanistan", but it is a "necessary condition" for making "progress" in Afghanistan.

Implicitly admitting its political vulnerability on the issue, on Sunday, the White House issued a compilation of statements by senior administration officials over the last 18 months aimed at showing that they have been tough with Pakistan on Afghanistan.

But none of the statements quoted in the compilation admitted the reality that Pakistan's policy of supporting the Taliban insurgency has long been firmly fixed and is not going to change.

Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, agreed in April 2009 that "elements" of the ISI were "connected to those militant organisations". But he suggested that Pakistani chief of staff Gen. Ashfaq Kayani, with whom Mullen had developed a close personal relationship, was in the process of changing the intelligence agency.

Mullen essentially pleaded for time, saying that change "isn't going to happen overnight" and that "it takes a fairly significant time to change an organisation."

Admitting that Pakistan's fundamental interests in Afghanistan conflict with U.S. war strategy would be a serious – and possibly, fatal – blow to the credibility of the Obama administration's strategy of using force to "reverse the momentum" of the Taliban.

To the extent that this contradiction and others are highlighted in the coming weeks as the news media comb through the mountains of new documents, it could accelerate the process by which political support for the Afghanistan War among the foreign policy and political elite continues to diminish.

The loss of political support for the war among the political and national security elite has accelerated in recent months and is already far advanced. More prominent figures in the national security elite, both Republican and Democratic, have signaled a developing consensus in those circles that the war strategy cannot succeed, paralleling the process that occurred in Washington in 2006 in regard to the Iraq War.

Just this past week, Robert Blackwill, former deputy national security adviser for George W. Bush, and Richard Haass, former Bill Clinton administration official and president of the Council on Foreign Relations, joined the chorus of doubters and called for ceding southern Afghanistan to the Taliban and withdrawing to the north.

Haas penned an article in Newsweek under the title, "[We're Not Winning. It's Not Worth It.](#)"

Gareth Porter is an investigative historian and journalist with Inter-Press Service specialising in U.S. national security policy. The paperback edition of his latest book, "[Perils of Dominance: Imbalance of Power and the Road to War in Vietnam](#)", was published in 2006.

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We Can Handle the Truth – Stop Trying to Hide the Truth from Us

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By Kevin Zeese [article link](#)

July 22, 2010 | Information Clearing House

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Afghanistan war logs:

Massive leak of secret files exposes truth of occupation

By Nick Davies and David Leigh [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 25, 2010 | The Guardian | ICH

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The WikiLeaks Afghanistan leak

BY Glenn Greenwald [article link](#) [article link](#)

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Wikileaks: Time to Celebrate, Time to Mourn

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WikiLeaks Bombshell Docs Paint Afghan War as Utter Disaster

Will We Finally Stop Throwing Money and Lives at This Catastrophe?

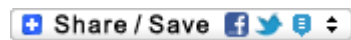
There's clear proof the war in Afghanistan is a complete failure -- we must demand an immediate exit.

By Ray McGovern [article link](#)

July 26, 2010 | AlterNet | Consortium News

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:33 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Robert Reich: The Great Decoupling of Corporate Profits from Jobs

The Great Decoupling of Corporate Profits from Jobs

by Robert Reich [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 27, 2010 | Robert Reich | CommonDreams

Second-quarter earnings reports are coming in, and they're making Wall Street smile. Corporate profits are up. And big American companies are sitting on a gigantic pile of money. The 500 largest non-financial firms held almost a trillion dollars in the second quarter, and that money pile is growing larger this quarter. Profits that plummeted in the recession have bounced back. Big businesses have recovered almost 90 percent of what they lost.

So with all this money and profit, they'll start hiring again, right? Wrong - for three reasons.

First, lots of their profits are coming from their overseas operations. So that's where they're investing and expanding production.

GM now sells more cars in China than it does in the US, but makes most of them there. The company now employs 32,000 hourly workers in China. But only 52,000 GM hourly workers remain in the United States - down from 468,000 in 1970.

GM isn't just hiring low-tech assembly workers in China. Last week the firm broke ground there on a \$250 million advanced technology center to develop batteries and other alternative energy sources.

You and I and other American taxpayers still own over 60 percent of GM. We bought GM to save GM jobs, remember?

GM officials say no American taxpayer money is being used to expand in China. But money is fungible. Because of our generosity, GM can now use the dollars it doesn't have to spend in the United States meeting its American payrolls and repaying its creditors, for new investments in China.

Second, big U.S. businesses are investing their cash in labor-saving technologies. This boosts their productivity, but not their payrolls.

Last Friday, for example, Ford reported a \$2.6 billion second-quarter profit. The firm is already more than two-thirds the way to equaling its record 1999 profits. But due to labor-saving technologies, Ford now has half as many employees as it did a decade ago.

Wall Street analysts are happy with Ford's "commitment to keeping capacity in check," according to the Wall Street Journal. Ford shares rose 5.2 percent Friday. "Keeping capacity in check" is the Street's way of saying "no new hiring." In fact, the Street is advising investors to sell the stocks of companies that talk openly of expanding capacity.

Finally, corporations are using their pile of money to pay dividends to their shareholders and buy back their own stock - thereby pushing up share prices.

Last Friday, GE announced it would raise its dividend by 20 percent and reinstate its share-buyback plan. It's GE's first dividend increase since the company cut its dividend in early 2009. As a result, GE shares are up more than 5% in the past few days.

Bottom line: Higher corporate profits no longer lead to higher employment. We're witnessing a great decoupling of company profits from jobs.

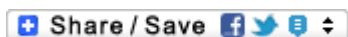
The next supply-side economist who tells you companies need more incentive (i.e. lower taxes) before they'll hire is living on another planet.

The reality is this: Big American companies may never rehire large numbers of workers. And they won't even begin to think about hiring until they know American consumers will buy their products. The problem is, American consumers won't start buying against until they know they have reliable paychecks.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:27 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Monday, July 26, 2010

[The Daily Bell: The Impossibility of Modern Capitalism](#)

The Impossibility of Modern Capitalism

by Staff Report [article link](#)

July 26, 2010 | The Daily Bell

Europe's dark secret ... They might not like to admit it, but Europeans don't mind a bit of capitalism ... When history comes to write the tale of the euro-zone crisis, the chief villains, if Europe's leaders have any say, will be not disassembling Greeks or dithering Germans, but the financial markets. Traders subjected Greece to "psychological terror", declared George Papandreou, its prime minister. ... Nowhere is contempt for free enterprise, and its linked evils of wealth and profits, more intense than in France. Nicolas Sarkozy has declared laissez-faire capitalism "finished". Almost alone in Europe, France imposes a yearly "fortune" tax on most biggish assets. In literature and philosophy, from Molière and Balzac to Sartre, the

French have denounced the corrupting power of money, and ridiculed the grasping nouveau riche. Today's bosses, always cigar-chomping, are subject to satire, scorn and even "boss-napping". Communists, Trotskyites and the New Anti-Capitalist Party are treated not as curiosities, but serious talk-show guests. – Economist

Dominant Social Theme: Let us spring to defense of free-markets.

Free-Market Analysis: The Economist magazine is once more mounting a defense of capitalism in its dry and witty way. This is a venerable old magazine that was founded in the mid-1800s in part to track the rise of railroads in Britain and the money they were making. Railroads have long departed as viable profit-making schemes (victims of the auto and ensuing government nationalizations), but the idea remains somehow that the West is still operating under "capitalism." Not only that, but the Economist wants us to know that the proper term is "laissez-faire capitalism."

Of course from our point of view the Economist is one of the mouthpieces for the British elite. As dashing and amusing as Punch magazine, as erudite as another mainstream mouthpiece, the Financial Times, the Economist profiles the goings-on of the world every week. For young people just starting to read it, the magazine offers a potpourri of delights. There are its clever profiles of little-known countries and its dry send-ups of the silly doings of powerful people. What a world! The Economist tells us. What are we to do but read and smile along with its talented, anonymous writers and its foolishness?

Well, how about a little "truth in labeling?" The West, in our view, is laboring under nothing nearly like laissez-faire capitalism. The Western model of economics currently is central-banking corporatism. Or to put it another way, power-elite mercantilism. A handful of impossibly wealthy Western families, led by the biggest banking family of all, has patiently seeded central banking in all parts of the world until the cancer has fully metastasized and there is no place beyond its reach.

Central banking is price-fixing pure and simple. And when you have got the price of money wrong, everything that flows from it is wrong as well. But nonetheless, this is the profile of the world today. One can argue as Ellen Brown does, for instance, that there is a difference between state-run central banks and private public central banks such as those operated by the US and perhaps Britain. But in practice we don't see it, or not at the level that the benefits are manifest.

Is there really such a difference between the Chinese central bank and the American central bank? Is the Chinese miracle really due to the state's control over that bank, or has the same thing happened to China under a central banking regime that has happened to the US and Europe – a destructive boom that will inevitably be followed by a bust. We see all the foreboding signs in China that we have seen elsewhere: an out-of-control real estate boom, myriad skyscrapers in numerous cities that languish unoccupied, a full city in Mongolia that lies fallow and unpopulated, etc.

And still the party continues. Hedge funds flock to China. Commentators tell us that the concern is overblown. Others patiently explain that it is "different this time" and that the Chinese will escape the fate of other fiat-money economies because the Chinese wealth is new wealth, because the Chinese are honorable and hard-workers, because the Chinese save while the West spends. Well, we shall see.

In Europe, the bust is already here. The one-size-fits-all currency does not after all fit everywhere and in every manner. In fact the EU and its euro experiment stand revealed as what people already knew it was, an export-scheme for the Germans and a way for the French elite to continually exercise the delightfully deranged notion that little France is able to swing far above its playing weight simply because the French are, well ... French. It is French perspicuity and French good-taste that gives France this peculiar ability. Except it does not. The euro is unraveling and we shall see if the French are able to sustain the Great Game in the face of the realities of the REAL market.

In the US, there is little pretense anymore that anything like a free-market exists. What was once a legitimate free-market society, admittedly with a statist core, especially after the advent of the Federal Reserve in 1913, has degenerated into a kind of "me, too" European socialism. Social Security, the Great Society programs and now Barack Obama's socializing of one-sixth of the American economy, are effectively transforming the US. There are "markets" in the US, but only the biggest players can afford to leverage them.

All over the West, the economic parameters are similar. Central banks print money to swell economies that then collapse and are jolted back to life via reflation like cardiac patients. This creates high inflation rates that rob the collapsing middle class of the paltry savings they have been able to amass. High taxes tend to strip more wealth from the middle class while regulatory excesses make it difficult for entrepreneurialism to take root or hold sway over the long term. Statist justice and, in America, a military industrialist complex and a prison-industrial complex make things even worse, adding an overlay of Big Government control to a Big Economy deflation and stagflation.

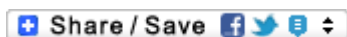
In truth, at this point, the West has nothing like free-markets. Money is created and controlled by mercantilist state processes. All forms of wealth are taxed aggressively and even mercilessly; entrepreneurial activity is regulated in such extreme detail as to exceed even the imagination of the most expert Swiftian satirists: The EU's recent mandate forbidding the sale of eggs in a twelve-pack must stand as one preeminent example.

What the West has is corporatism. There is a kind of free-market that exists, but one must belong to a large interest group to use it. If one is skilled enough with numbers or willing to become a lawyer, then one may join a large corporation and derive the benefits of such. Alternatively one may become a teacher and seek shelter in Teachers' Unions. One may become a military person or a police officer or fire officer or health-care worker and find protection in public unionism. One may work directly for the government. In all such cases, one is subordinate to a larger entity within the predetermined parameters, organized by a political priesthood at the beck and call of a power elite that stands invisibly behind these ever-vaster compilations of state-control.

Still, it is fashionable to maintain, as the Economist does, that the West is in a fervor of full-blooded capitalism of the laissez-faire variety. How on earth the Economist and its writers can maintain this fiction is beyond us. But they wish to, and so they do. It is part of the Hegelian dialectic, we suppose. If one part of the elite machinery claims that what we have got is capitalism-in-the-raw, then another mainstream element can continually claim that such naked and merciless enterprises need to be ameliorated by the rationalizing hand of government. Lord knows where it ends, though, as the cognitive dissonance grows continually more extreme.

Conclusion: One visualizes the USSR, eventually, and the Economist magazine, as dry and witty as ever, droning on about the competitive difficulties of aligning five-year plans and observing cheerfully that the West's Leviathan will have to grow bigger still in the name of democracy and fairness and to ensure that free-markets do not get out of hand. Eventually it all implodes. And the Economist magazine ("newspaper" as they like to call it) will lose whatever credibility it still retains. Pity it can't happen sooner.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:43 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

[Robert Higgs: A Splendid Essay on the Two Great Classes in Contemporary America](#)

A Splendid Essay on the Two Great Classes in Contemporary America

By Robert Higgs [article link](#)

Jul 23, 2010 | Independent Institute

Angelo M. Codevilla, professor emeritus of international relations at Boston University, has written an extraordinary essay for the July/August issue of The American Spectator. It's called "[America's Ruling Class – And the Perils of Revolution](#)," but it deals much more extensively with the anatomy and functioning of the class system in the United States today than with the prospect of revolution.

Codevilla cuts immediately to the core: the United States today is divided into (a) a ruling class, which dominates the government at every level, the schools and universities, the mainstream media, Hollywood, and a great deal else, and (b) all of the rest of us, a heterogeneous agglomeration that Codevilla dubs the country class. The ruling class holds the lion's share of the institutional power, but the country class encompasses perhaps two-thirds of the people.

Members of the two classes do not like one another. In particular, the ruling class views the rest of the population as composed of ignoramuses who are vicious, violent, racist, religious, irrational, unscientific, backward, generally ill-behaved, and incapable of living well without constant, detailed direction by our betters; and it views itself as perfectly qualified and entitled to pound us into better shape by the generous application of laws, taxes, subsidies, regulations, and unceasing declarations of its dedication to bringing the country—and indeed the entire world—out of its present darkness and into the light of the Brave New World it is busily engineering.

This class divide has little to do with rich versus poor or Democrat versus Republican. At its core, it has to do with the division between, on the one hand, those whose attitudes are attuned to the views endorsed by the ruling class (especially “political correctness”) and whose fortunes are linked directly or indirectly with government programs and, on the other hand, those whose outlooks and interests derive from and focus on private affairs, especially the traditional family, religion, and genuine private enterprise. Above all, as Codevilla makes plain, “for our ruling class, identity always trumps.” These people know they are superior in every way, and they are not shy about letting us know that they are. Arrogance might as well be their middle name.

The ruling class, not surprisingly, is also the statist party:

[O]ur ruling class’s standard approach to any and all matters, its solution to any and all problems, is to increase the power of the government – meaning of those who run it, meaning themselves, to profit those who pay with political support for privileged jobs, contracts, etc.

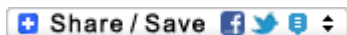
Despite the rulers’ chronic complaints about people’s exercising “discrimination” of one kind or another, they have no intention of treating everybody equally. Hence, “[l]aws and regulations nowadays are longer than ever because length is needed to specify how people will be treated unequally.” As the recent health-care and financial-reform statutes illustrate perfectly, however, much of the inequality is achieved not directly, but by the statutes’ delegation of authority to countless regulatory and administrative bodies, which will use their ample discretion to do the desired dirty work.

Codevilla’s description of the ruling class and its modus operandi is longer and more detailed than his account of the country class, which is probably inevitable in view of the latter’s extreme heterogeneity. And the force of his argument wanes a bit toward the end of the essay, when he muses about how a country party might turn the tide against the domination and contempt it presently suffers at the hands of its officious rulers. Nevertheless, I heartily recommend this magnificent essay, which is one of the most intelligent, forthright discussions of America’s current socio-political condition I have ever read. If we serfs are ever to escape the grip of our overbearing, self-appointed nobility, the first requirements will be to recognize correctly our current condition, to denounce openly its injustice and idiocy, and to deride every claim of legitimacy or entitlement our rulers have the temerity to make or presume.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:36 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Sunday, July 25, 2010

Bob Chapman: The Fed Participates In The Destruction Of The Economy

The Fed Participates In The Destruction Of The Economy

by Bob Chapman [article link](#) [article link](#)

07.23.10 | International Forecaster | Silver Bear Cafe

The miscreants in Congress have just passed their version of so-called financial reform, which they euphemistically call financial regulation legislation, which when signed by our peerless leader, will set up the Federal Reserve as a totalitarian monstrosity with absolute control over our financial system as a reward for the Fed's intentional destruction of our economy.

Now mind you, the Federal Reserve, which Congress has now put in charge of our entire financial system, is the privately owned, and largely foreign owned, central bank of the US which has always operated, and which continues to operate, in total secrecy, and with zero accountability. So, after the Fed destroyed our economy with malice aforethought, it certainly must have made perfect sense to the apparent morons and village idiots in Congress to put the Fed completely in charge. That way, we won't have the slightest clue about what is being done to our financial system, which the Fed will regulate in total secrecy, with the usual zero accountability, and with input from the Fed's foreign owners who will have a say over our economy and our financial system from behind the scenes. Who could possibly argue with such logic? You just can't make this stuff up! Obviously, our Congress are not idiots, as they know exactly what they are doing. After all, what would you expect from a bunch of corrupt Illuminist marionettes who are either on the take, who are compromised by the skeletons in their closet, or both.

To summarize what has just happened in more colorful terms, our Congress Critters, in their utterly profound wisdom (corruption), under the guise of financial reform (the creation of a financial monopoly), have set the Fed up at the top of the financial food chain, like a great white shark looking over a large school of tasty fish (other banks, and also many other financial institutions like investment banks, insurance companies, hedge funds, pension funds, brokerage firms, commodity firms, etc., aka "non-bank financial companies," aka the competition). The proposed Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC), which is little more than a bunch of Illuminist marionettes like our Congress, will make all the new rules and regulations for the Fed to lord it over all the other financial institutions in our economy. In reality, the Fed will write all the rules and hand them to the FSOC for rubber-stamping.

Then we have the proposed Office of Financial Research, which will be set up as the new financial Gestapo, gathering information about all the problems being experienced by banks and non-bank financial companies alike so that this information can be used against them in order to eliminate them from competition, to liquidate them among the larger institutions for pennies on the dollar, and to provide juicy tidbits of insider trading information for the fun and profitability of Fed cronies. Picture pieces of meat being fed to a school of hungry piranhas if you would like an appropriate metaphor.

Did you ever wonder why the Fed keeps doling out loans to their crony legacy banks that are parked at favorable rates of interest with the Fed instead of being loaned out into the general economy to help fuel the recovery, so-called. Is it to shore up the financial reports of the zombie banks? Nothing could shore up their financial reports except blatant lies about their assets by using mark-to-model fantasy values instead of mark-to-model reality values. This is just the token excuse given for this free ride gift from the Fed to the Illuminist legacy banks. The real reasons for this storehouse of sterilized money are quite different, and are multi-faceted.

First, this is one of the chief methods that the Illuminists are using to impoverish pensioners and savers while enriching the Illuminist banks at taxpayer expense by giving them a spread (return on the money they borrow from the Fed, at near zero interest, and then park with the Fed, at 3%, no-risk interest), thereby keeping their zero interest loan money out of the general economy, which they intend to destroy to pave the way for a one-world government, while simultaneously keeping inflation in check because the money is not circulating in the general economy via loans (the money is thereby said to be "sterilized").

Second, it will be used as a token injection of cash to keep our economy from sinking, thus stretching out the inevitable death of our economy to the farthest possible point. Yes, that's right, to keep their salaries and bonuses going as long as possible, the Illuminist banks will throw us some bones once all the too-big-to-fail bailout money, stimulus packages and currency swaps are exhausted and can no longer be politically maintained.

But the chief reason for this cash is to fund the feeding frenzy that will occur as most of the weaker financial institutions are gobbled up and liquidated pursuant to the provisions of the new financial regulation bill which will put the FDIC in charge of the liquidations. The FDIC's liquidations will be funded in advance by the US Treasury, which means that the Fed will print or digitally credit the money to the US Treasury at interest out of thin air, (the verbiage in the proposed legislation removes all mention of the Fed's involvement through clever wording which mentions only the US Treasury, since they think that the Congress Critters and US citizens are too stupid to know that the US Treasury in turn cannot float any loans to the FDIC without the Fed's explicit involvement, but never mind that) based on the "fair value" of the various assets held by the institutions that are being liquidated by the FDIC. The Fed will front the money to the FDIC via the US Treasury so the FDIC can pay the amounts demanded by the various claimants, with the assets to be sold later, ostensibly to avoid fire sales. The loans from the US Treasury funded with the Fed's funny money (at interest no less) will be paid back out of the sales proceeds of the assets, which ostensibly could then be liquidated under more favorable terms.

So here we have this liquidation system based on "fair value," whatever that means, which will of course vary under different circumstances to enhance the interests and profits of Illuminist cronies. When a bank or non-bank financial company under liquidation is under Illuminist control, or has Illuminist creditors/claimants, the fair value will be a mark-to-model fantasy value, so the Illuminist financial entity, or Illuminist creditors, as the case may be, will get maximum value, while the assets are later sold at substantially lower mark-to-market values, resulting in a loss to the US Treasury, and by extension, to US taxpayers. When a non-Illuminist legacy bank or non-bank financial company has no substantial Illuminist owners or creditors, its assets will be given the much lower mark-to-market values, first to force them into liquidation, and then to assure that their assets are sold off at pennies on the dollar to Illuminist banks and financial institutions. And where will the Illuminist banks and financial institutions get the money to buy these assets at pennies on the dollar? Why from the money they have parked with the Fed at 3% interest of course. The Illuminist banks will either use that money directly, or loan it to other Illuminist financial institutions at favorable rates, to fund the fire-sale purchases. Whoa, look at those piranhas go!!!

That looks to be a pretty nice racket, don't you think? And that is what this financial reform bill is all about - eating up the competition and surreptitiously screwing the taxpayer. Heads we win, tails you lose. We get the gold mine, you get the shaft. This is Illuminist thinking at its most diabolical level.

We would also point out that the lax accounting rules allowed by regulators to hide the destruction of our financial system are in no way changed in any significant way by the financial regulation bill just passed by Congress. So regulators will continue to allow banks to state their assets at mark-to-model fantasy values. And they will continue to allow banks to park their losses off balance sheet just before the end of a quarterly reporting period, and then put them back on after the quarter has ended (think Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers). Regulators will also continue to allow all the other smoke and mirror accounting frauds currently utilized by banks to hide their walking dead status. That is because the so-called "Fin Reg" bill has nothing to do with reform and has everything to do with perpetuating the corrupt system, allowing the too-big-to-fail bankster-gangsters to continue foisting their fraudulent toxic waste bonds and derivatives on unsuspecting sucker-dupe clients, while creating a financial monopoly in the Frankenstein Fed which will use its newfound complete and unfettered power to cull out the competition and set up the Illuminist legacy banks as the only financial game in town. That is where we are headed.

But that's not all folks. The G-20 is now talking in terms of using special drawing rights (SDR's) as an international reserve currency for the world's international banking cabal, which is composed of privately owned and/or government controlled central banks from around the world which operate in coordination with each other surreptitiously, although we note that internecine spats do occur from time to time. We also note in passing that even those spats are often staged to gain political advantage or to grandstand a point of view for political consumption only (i.e. saying things that are popular but that you have no intention of supporting, or that have no possible chance of being passed - think Sarkozy, think ECB calls for austerity as they create a trillion dollar bailout package for the PIIGS).

In any case, while the G-20 set up their SDR's, based on a basket of fiat currencies, everyone else (that would be the bourgeoisie proletariat of common serfs) will get to keep their usual currencies, after they have been devalued against other currencies around the world, thereby destroying the value and buying power of the "unlucky" losers in the currency devaluation game. US citizens and the dollar are going to be on the losing end along with most of the other developed countries and their currencies due to their totally abysmal fiscal condition which has of course been brought about through the many Illuminist machinations which we have discussed ad infinitum in issue after issue of the IF. The "lucky" winners in the currency devaluation game will get to deal with massive trade deficits instead of lost buying power because their exported goods and services will become astronomically expensive overseas. So either way, the masses will have their devaluation problems, while the bankers sit on their SDR's.

But if the SDR's are nothing but a basket of fiat currencies, then how would the bankers be better off than the serfs? We're glad you asked. Now here comes the kicker.

First, you can rest assured that the Illuminists will never allow SDR's, or any international reserve currency, to be anything but a fiat currency. They will never succumb to the discipline of gold. We repeat: Never, ever, ever, will they voluntarily back SDR's with gold!!! That is why gold suppression is JOB ONE at the Fed and at central banks around the world. Do you think that after the Illuminists had FDR take us off the gold standard domestically in 1933, and then had Nixon take us off the gold standard internationally in 1971, that they are even thinking of going back to any kind of a gold standard? If you see the Illuminists go back to the gold standard where gold becomes a reserve currency for SDR's or for any other world reserve currency, then that would be one of the happiest days of our lives, because it would mean the Illuminati's plans for world government have totally failed and that they have to start from scratch. We would love nothing better, and it could happen, but we doubt they will capitulate that easily. A pitched battle lies ahead.

And that brings us to our reference at the beginning of this dissertation to the effect that all but one piece of the US legislative tapestry is in place in order for the Illuminists to move forward with their plan to achieve world financial domination. And what piece of legislation is that? Why, it's the totally bogus scam called the "Cap and Trade" bill, of course, which will be based on the world class fraud that manmade greenhouse gasses like carbon dioxide are the cause of global warming, which, oops, has now reversed and become global cooling (but never mind that).

Why is Cap and Trade so important? Because the Cap and Trade bill calls for the creation of what are called "carbon credits." So why is that significant? Well, that is because carbon credits will be used to back the new world reserve currency called SDR's. Carbon credits will be used in lieu of gold, oil or any other tangible physical asset. After all, carbon credits are the ultimate when it comes to creating a new fiat valued asset or commodity. The Illuminists can make these carbon credits appear out of thin air just as they do with our Federal Reserve Notes based on totally subjective and politically controlled standards that will be used to bring profits and financial benefits to Illuminist cronies (that would include Obama, Maurice Strong and Goldman Sachs, to name but a few of the partners in, and potential beneficiaries of, the Cap and Trade scam). At the same time these carbon credits will be used to destroy Illuminist enemies and to control their serfs (that would be you, Joe Public) by moving the wealth of the non-Illuminist serfs and the non-Illuminist businesses of the developed world into the international banking cabal's SDR's and also into third world nations in a move calculated to level the playing field in preparation for implementation of world government.

Recently the Jackasses have been pushing a partial Cap and Trade bill into their pending climate change and energy legislation which would only apply to certain utilities. This is not acceptable in any way, shape or form. This is just a "foot in the door" move by Illuminist miscreants in Congress to get the carbon credits and the carbon credit exchanges up and running so they can have their SDR's backed by carbon credits on albeit a reduced basis. This will then be extended to cover greater areas of the economy by making it look like the system is working with the usual false statistics we can expect from our "beloved" government, or by sneaking in extensions of the original "utility only" Cap and Trade bill to cover greater areas of our economy into some monstrously long piece of legislation that no one will read in full and that will have nothing to do with cap and trade or carbon credits. It will just suddenly appear on everyone's radar screen as the people are impoverished not knowing what has even hit them. We don't care by what name the Illuminist boot-lickers in Congress call it, any legislation that will have any elements of Cap and Trade or carbon credits, or greenhouse gas credits, or whatever they wish to call the elements of this rip-off system, the whole scheme is based on the false premise that manmade greenhouse gasses are the cause of global warming, and therefore any such legislation is a totally bogus scam no

matter how small the sector of our economy might be that it would impact. Pound your Congressmen until they ask for mercy. Do not allow any element of the Cap and Trade system to appear in any legislation whatsoever, no matter what they call it, or how they sugarcoat it, or how they try to hide it through obtuse language or by sneaking it into some other bill that is totally unrelated to environmental issues. NO, NO, NO should be your only answer to anything involving this scam. If they get any kind of carbon credits going, it is all over but the crying, unless we can break the gold suppression, boot out all the incumbents and undo all the damage these miscreants have done to our country.

But if carbon credits are nothing more than paper credits, how does that benefit the banking cabal? Another good question, and this is where that diabolical Illuminist thinking kicks in again.

First, we start by noting that the use of paper contracts created out of thin air certainly seems to work in the banking cabal's favor at the COMEX and LBME, where all they ever do is use naked short paper contracts to manipulate the prices of commodities around the world.

But the system of carbon credits goes much further than merely making fraudulent paper manipulations in this or that market. This will be fraud, thievery and criminality on a worldwide scale. The Illuminists will use this system of carbon credits to suck out the real, hard-earned wealth generated by the productivity of the developed countries, which will then be used to secure the international banking cabal's SDR's, while the old currencies of the serf bourgeoisie proletariat remain backed by absolutely nothing but thin air. Remember, people are going to have to take real money out of their profits to fund and purchase these credits, which will be traded on a carbon exchange run by the wicked cabal of international bankster-gansters in the same manner as they run the COMEX and LBME. On top of all that, the Illuminists plan to institute a new global carbon tax to be assessed against the people of developed nations around the world, which will then be used to fund the apparatus they intend to use to establish world government through organizations like the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), the World Bank (WB), the floundering World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations (UN) as well as various non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and other Illuminist-sponsored concerns. The cabal will also use their new influx of wealth from the Cap and Trade scam in the form of carbon credits and a carbon tax to fund loans to the third world nations ostensibly to help them increase their productivity and standard of living, but the money will come with strings attached that will enslave these underdeveloped countries to the international banking cabal. This is exactly what the IMF and World Bank have done to third world nations for decades, but now they will be on steroids. It will be business as usual on a much larger scale.

The Cap and Trade bill is, in reality, the newest iteration of the income tax, but on a global scale. Cap and Trade is simply another way of sucking money out of the masses to pay for government overspending which in the US is currently funded by the Federal Reserve which makes loans to the US Treasury at interest to fund ongoing government corruption and profligacy. Virtually every country on the planet operates in this fashion. The Illuminati intend for the carbon exchange to become the new Federal Reserve, where carbon credits will be created out of thin air instead of Federal Reserve Notes, and where the world reserve currency will become global in nature instead of being limited to the currency of one nation.

This scheme to replace the dollar with SDR's backed by carbon credits will cause the predominance of the US in world trade to fade away, and the power of the US will be reduced to that of a third world country as US citizens are impoverished down to levels that will give them continual nightmares for decades to come. And we can assure you that the same people who have ownership interests in the Federal Reserve will also own interests in the new carbon exchange, or should we say exchanges, because every Illuminist region will want to have one for fun and profits. That is the plan, unless you stop them, and we mean NOW!!!

By use of the new Cap and Trade system of carbon credits, the Illuminists will be able to charge utilities and corporations, in a totally subjective and political manner, for their greenhouse gas emissions, thus greatly increasing the cost of producing energy, as well as the cost of producing virtually every other product and service on the planet (talk about inflation). Most of these increased costs will be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher utility bills and higher prices for virtually all goods and services. This will reduce the competitiveness of companies in developed countries and will force many of them to move their operations overseas where carbon credits will either not be charged or will be assigned at much lower levels. This process of forcing companies overseas is just more of the same financial destruction reeked by free trade, globalization, off-shoring and outsourcing, as well as by both legal and illegal immigration. It's just

the same old, same old in a different package. Yes, we are starting to hear that "large sucking sound" again as US jobs disappear at an ever-increasing rate. And mind you that we now have nearly one out of every four Americans out of work already.

Why do you think we have this BP oil spill that has destroyed the economy of the Bible Belt and put pressure on the production of oil, to make it more scarce, for the fun and profits of the Illuminati who own all the big oil concerns. The main thrust of this event, which is a multi-purpose false flag event, is to get the Cap and Trade bill passed, so the international banking cabal can back their new SDR's with carbon credits. They have caused the Jackasses and their peerless leader much political fallout because of their desperation to have this abomination passed by their marionettes in Congress. If you want to picture one of the Illuminati now, drooling at the prospect of SDR's backed by carbon credits, think about the movie "Alien," and picture the horrible creature opening its jaws, drooling acid, as it prepares to inject a hapless victim (that would be you) with an alien fetus that will eat you from the inside out. What a perfect metaphor.

These people in your "beloved" government are out to destroy you unless you stop them this November.

Now let's put the whole Illuminist plan together for you, in the event the Cap and Trade bill goes through. It will be like a combined epiphany of understanding, shock and horror once you get the big picture.

So, we assume now that Cap and Trade is passed like Obamacare and Fin Reg through unconstitutional and illegal legislation via criminal skullduggery, bribes and threats mixed with pork orgies and bogus, convoluted legislative procedures where form over substance reigns supreme.

Next comes devaluation of all currencies while SDR's backed by carbon credits are established by the G-20 nations. This devaluation will bring home the risk inherent in all the faltering, debt-ridden economies of the world, and their fiat currencies, including the US, the UK, Europe, Canada, Japan, the Middle East, many Asian countries and even the BRIC nations. This will result in higher interest rates no matter how low the Fed funds rate and the various other interbank rates are kept. Investors will want a return, or they will not invest, especially in areas where currencies have been devalued raising the specter of run away inflation by virtue of the escalating costs of imported goods as well as the astronomical costs of goods and services caused by the Cap and Trade bill. If interest rates are not raised, there will be another credit crunch. This new credit crunch will be like the first one, only on massive steroids. Whether interest rates rise, or credit stops, or both, economies around the world will falter and fail as the cost of higher interest, and/or the lack of credit, as the case may be, does its dirty work.

This devaluation will destroy the old system as the stock markets crash, while the bond markets, especially the municipal bond markets, nosedive. The buck will be broken on all money-market funds. The real estate market will become non-existent both in terms of purchases and refinances. Commercial and residential real estate values, and the mortgages, bonds and derivatives associated with them, will be heavily devalued, with the worst of them being reduced to pennies on the dollar. This will destroy many banks, but also investment banks, insurance companies, brokerage houses, hedge funds, pension plans, loan companies and other "non-bank financial companies." The FSOC, under the Fed's direction, will gather information through the Office of Financial Research to see which banks and non-bank financial companies are in trouble, and will direct the FDIC to liquidate them as previously described, with one set of rules being applied to Illuminist banks and financial concerns, and another standard being applied to all others. Then out comes the money parked at the Fed as it is invested and loaned out to the large Illuminist legacy banks and other Illuminist financial concerns so they can have their feeding frenzy at pennies on the dollar, or dupe the taxpayers out of their hard-earned money, as the case may be, all as described above in detail.

Meanwhile, back at the G-20 ranch, the large Illuminist central banks and their many crony institutions will continue to hide their losses with fantasy accounting methods, with their books being cooked until they are "well done," or in some cases, burnt to a crisp. As for the rest of the banks and financial institutions that got sucked into the Illuminist web of deceit in toxic loans, mortgages, bonds and derivatives of various kinds, they will be all gobbled up. Some of the larger Illuminist banks will be sacrificed to lend credibility to the proposition that everyone is being treated fairly and that this is not just an Illuminist mop-up operation even though it really will be. Once the feeding frenzy is over, the few Illuminist institutions left standing will finally reveal their desperate financial situation as the Quadrillion Dollar Derivative Death Star goes

supernova, and once again they will play the too-big-to-fail card, especially since, at that point, most of the economies and financial institutions around the world will have already been destroyed and liquidated. But this time the bailouts will be accomplished by using SDR's backed by carbon credits instead of using US dollars and currency swaps. The entire world will be looted via carbon taxes and credits in order to bailout the few remaining Illuminist banks and financial institutions which will threaten to send the world into an everlasting depression if they are not bailed out. The losses will be so enormous that it will take several generations of world citizenry to pay it all back via the carbon taxes and credits, thus enslaving them to the international banking cabal forever. Then the few remaining institutions in the world will be organized first into regions economically, politically and socially.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:27 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tim Murray: Wilful Ignorance Is The Bedrock of Denialism

Wilful Ignorance Is The Bedrock of Denialism

By Tim Murray [article link](#) [article link](#)

28 March, 2010 | Candobetter | CounterCurrents

Albert Bartlett once spoke about Mark Twain's "silent lie". It refers to the habit of lying by not revealing the truth. If I know that someone has planted a bomb in the local subway, but I choose not to share that information with the authorities, by Twain's definition, I am a liar. But when the information that I withhold is of critical importance to our lives or the lives of innocents, then I am more than a liar. I am criminally negligent. Such is the case with many politicians and environmental leaders. They know that we are facing economic collapse from dwindling oil supplies and ecological Armageddon from over-population, soil degradation, overtaxed aquifers and species loss, but they choose to shield the public from the brutal truth.

Several reasons have been advanced to account for their silence. One is ideological. The syncretistic blend of New Left thinking, feminism, cultural relativism, xenophilia and political correctness, sometimes bundled under the rubric of "cultural Marxism" has been a proven reality filter. The stark fact that there is not "enough to go around", that we are already in overshoot, cannot be acknowledged by ideologues who view the present through the prism of an antique social justice agenda. Their focus is not on stopping growth, but managing and deflecting it. It is not on acknowledging limits, but 'growing' them with more efficient use of resources by land use strategies, pie-in-the-sky technologies and Spartan living habits. And it is not about family planning to cap population growth, but granting women reproductive choices even if they those choices result in unsustainable growth. For the growth management syndicate there is never a "longage" of people but a shortage of food. A shortage that can be cured by perpetual foreign aid, political reform or fair and efficient distribution. The notion that modern agriculture will collapse with the demise of fossil fuels or that organic farming or "re-localization" cannot sustain 7 billion people is beyond their comprehension.

There is another more mercenary reason for population myopia and green silence, however. Simply put, political parties and mainstream environmental NGOs, for the most part, are paid "not to understand". Organizations like the Sierra Club, Conservation International, Nature Conservancy and the David Suzuki Foundation, accept corporate money. Some even permit corporate representatives to hold directorships. This comes at a price. What are corporations, and particularly financial institutions all about? Growth and Debt, which go together like a horse and carriage. An apt simile for the post-carbon future that looms around the corner. So we shall have growth, but it shall be painted green. Voila. "Smart" growth. A first class ticket on a doomed ship.

But most importantly, corporations crave the certification of social responsibility that environmental organizations can give them. In the 1990s big business felt the winds of change. Environmentalism had gone mainstream. It became evident that opposing the public mood was not a wise business strategy. So rather than war with environmental organizations, it proved commercially advantageous to jump on their bandwagon. If they could gain the environmental seal of approval in exchange

for acquiescence to growth, they could proceed with business-as-usual. And just as the Pope sold indulgences to the wealthy benefactors of the Middle Ages, the “Pope” of the Sierra Club, among others, sold ecological dispensation to corporate benefactors. As anointed Green Citizens, “progressive” corporations can count the profits and bask in self-righteous glory as the population grows relentlessly.

But this fact raises a more fundamental issue. Proof of this corporate infiltration is available by the mere perusal of their financial reports. So why aren’t the members of environmental NGOs doing their homework? Why do people who would conduct a title search or home inspection when they buy a house, or scrutinize the financial report of their union or strata council, or make the purchase of a car subject to a mechanical inspection not care to apply the same rigor and due diligence to the environmental organizations they support? Why don’t they care to know who is paying the piper? And why do they rely upon the filtered, spoon-fed news that these green organizations dispense rather than do their own research? Why do they delegate their thinking to these kept women of corporate duplicity, their chosen gatekeepers of knowledge?

Are people lax, indolent and ignorant? At times, most are. Despite numerous opportunities, I have chosen to be ignorant about the workings of my car, or how to trouble-shoot my computer problems, or even how to fill in my own income tax form. But like other people, I address many areas of my life with earnest curiosity. Many of us effect great interest in proper nutrition, effective exercise, better gardening, shrewd shopping and a host of hobbies and interests. But we are deliberately oblivious to those societal issues which threaten our collective survival. Many adopt the posture of “positive thinking” ---the wilful ignorance of the blatantly obvious. Like those who persisted in playing cards while the Titanic listed, they whistle past the graveyard of a civilization that edges closer to the cliff. The writing is on the wall, but they choose not to read it.

While the media collaborates with their self-imposed stupefaction, it only panders to their appetite for escape. There is an insatiable market for denial and self-indulgence. Even news must be entertaining. We are transfixed by stock market quotations, economic indices, sporting events and movie star divorces, but bored with the end of the world as we know it. Of those who read, it is murder mysteries, horror stories, romance novels, tales of the supernatural and pop psychology that seem to command interest. We are literally amusing ourselves to death. Even those nations with democratic levers are captive of an ecologically illiterate electorate. Everywhere we are oppressed by the coalition of the uniformed, who consist of, in the words of Tasmania’s Peter Bright, “People who don’t think, and who don’t want to think; people who don’t know —and who don’t want to know; and those who don’t care, and don’t want to care.”

We are fatally flawed. Unfit and undeserving of a better fate than that which awaits us like a black-hooded executioner beside his chopping block, axe in hand. Poetic justice for the architects of the Sixth Extinction, a species that despite its vaunted intelligence, continues to undercut its own life support system like a cannibal feeding off his own limbs. The fossil record is full of failed models like ours. A Greek tragedy in the making.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:23 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Robert Shetterly: Portraits of Courage

Portraits of Courage

These aren't just people in paintings looking at you. They are people imploring you to listen and act.

by Robert Shetterly [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 24, 2010 | YES! Magazine | CommonDreams

Robert Shetterly is the painter of Americans Who Tell the Truth, a series of portraits honoring the words and work of courageous Americans throughout history.

I did not want to paint [these portraits](#). Over 25 years, I had built up a career as a surrealist painter-enough of a career to pay my bills, work full time, and, it seemed to me, fulfill my societal obligations as an artist. I had never painted a portrait.

Then September 11, 2001... then a war launched not against the perpetrators of the crime but against a country where they had some training bases... then the blatantly false reasons promoted by our government for the preemptive war on Iraq. My sense of obligation as an artist changed.

At first, what I wanted most was to express my grief, cynicism, and shame. But I soon realized that agonizing over my shame for this country would lead me nowhere positive. Why, I wondered, don't I surround myself with people who make me feel proud, people who have insisted that this country live up to its own professed ideals about inalienable rights, equality, and justice? Why don't I invoke their spirits by painting their portraits?

I did not want to support the myth of American exceptionalism, the stories of power and domination that we tell to set ourselves apart from the rest of humankind, but to tell the story of this country's long and courageous struggle for justice. Our revolution did not end in 1787. At the signing of the Constitution, we did not free the slaves, give political rights to freed African Americans, Native Americans, women, the disabled, or poor whites. Our revolution was just beginning.

I decided to portray real, ordinary people who continued that revolution by fighting to extend rights to everyone, whose persistence and courage changed their own lives and provided role models of all of us. "Without courage," William Sloane Coffin said, "there are no other virtues." Any person acting with courage for justice, becomes a teacher, becomes a light in the darkness, encourages all of us to become our own lights. Just as fear is infectious, so is courage.

Think of [Sojourner Truth](#), the illiterate ex-slave, who became one of the greatest leaders for women's rights and the abolition of slavery. Today we remember and admire her, not her rich white owner-not his social status, money, or privilege, but her courage. [Colonel Ann Wright](#)'s resignation from the diplomatic corps in protest of the illegal invasion of Iraq was not intended to make herself a celebrity. She resigned to better defend the Constitution that she had sworn to protect. Think of [Rachel Carson](#), dying with cancer, refusing to be intimidated by the chemical companies who were using all of their power to humiliate and discredit her when she exposed how their chemicals were poisoning the natural world. What a debt we owe to her courage!

At the same moment that I got the idea to paint the portraits, I knew that the words of the subjects had to be on their portraits. The statements being made about various forms of justice had to be literally spelled out. These aren't just people in paintings looking at you. They are people imploring you to listen and act.

When I began painting, I didn't expect to share the portraits-I imagined a stack in my attic that would make me feel better. I set a goal of 50 portraits, but never expected to reach it. Now there are 150 portraits. They travel to schools, colleges, libraries, museums, and community centers all over the country.

I titled the collection "Americans Who Tell the Truth" to recognize that telling the truth about our nation and its needs is not a small act, but one of great bravery. [Marion Wright Edelman](#), head of the Children's Defense Fund, once said, "What's wrong with our children? Adults telling children to be honest while lying and cheating. Adults telling children not to be violent while marketing and glorifying violence. I believe adult hypocrisy is the biggest problem children face in America." I have repeated that quote to students of all ages all over this country and have yet to find a student who disagreed with it.

I would not classify my decision to give up my former artistic career to paint these portraits as an act of courage, but I would call it an act of defiance, of resistance, of refusal to accept a lie as a patriotic reason for war, of refusal to accept that a country that allows a presidential election to be stolen is the greatest democracy on earth. The portraits are an affirmation that only through persistent courage and dedicated citizenship can we maintain our ideals. If we want to define the destiny of this country as a movement toward enlightenment and justice, we have to accept the responsibility of making that happen.

As Frederick Douglass said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." He also said, "Find out what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong that will be imposed on them." For me, those two quotes explain all we need to know about the interests of power and the necessity of citizenship.

Painting the portraits has been an enormous education for me. Cynicism about corruption and hypocrisy is hard to maintain once you have studied the lives of John Lewis, Alice Paul, [Diane Wilson](#), [Bill McKibben](#), Dahr Jamail, [Lily Yeh](#), or so many others. It's daunting to oppose the forces that prefer war, daunting to oppose the forces that prefer economic hierarchy, daunting to oppose corporate media and the control that corporations have on the political process, but it's also exhilarating. And it's right.

Robert Shetterly wrote this essay for YES! Magazine, a national, nonprofit media organization that fuses powerful ideas with practical actions. Robert has been a painter, printmaker, and illustrator for forty years. He lives in Brooksville, Maine.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:12 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Saturday, July 24, 2010

[Philip Giraldi: A Tea Party to Nowhere](#)

A Tea Party to Nowhere

By Philip Giraldi [article link](#)

06/03/10 | Campaign for Liberty

The Tea Party phenomenon has attracted a good deal of both good and bad attention in the media. Though it would perhaps be a stretch to describe it as a movement in that it has only limited organization and focus, it does tap into a genuine disconnect between the American people and the federal government in Washington. Most Tea Partiers claim to want smaller and cheaper government, less interference from Washington in their daily lives, and fewer programs that are intended to socially re-engineer the nation. So far, so good, but then comes the huge failure to comprehend that is as wide as the Grand Canyon. Most also want a strong, assertive national defense and are supporters of an aggressive foreign and security policy.

Tea Partiers have unfortunately been fed a line of hokum by politicians aided and abetted by the mainstream media. They fail to understand that it is precisely the interventionist defense and foreign policies that are driving the bad things they see in government. It is easy to forget that when Bill Clinton left office in 2000 there was a budget surplus. Ballooning defense and security spending since that time, all accomplished without raising taxes, has been the engine of growth for a \$13 trillion national debt, a total that increases by \$4 billion every day. The United States now accounts for 45% of the entire world total for military spending, euphemistically referred to as "defense." The Pentagon budget has gone from \$432 billion in 2001 to a projected \$720 billion in 2011, not including the costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Federal Government is twice as big as it was in 2001 and there has been the creation of major new bureaucracies at the Department

of Homeland Security and the office of the Director of National Intelligence, neither of which can be regarded as a model of efficiency.

Fueling government growth is the fearmongering that has been artfully encouraged by Democrat and Republican alike. Fear of terrorists, fear of unruly foreigners, fear of the unknown. Fear that unless something is done and more money is spent, the United States will be destroyed by a nameless, faceless threat. The Tea Partiers should instead understand that terrorists will only tear down the United States if we Americans help them to do so. Irrational fear of a small group of men hiding in a cave in Asia is what drives larger government, the infringement of civil liberties, and more taxes and regulation. The United States is on a road that can only lead to ruin. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 in circumstances somewhat similar to the current American financial slide, a Russian politician joked that his country was somewhat like Upper Volta with nuclear armed ballistic missiles. At the time Upper Volta was the poorest country in the world and his point was that having the world's greatest missile force did not make up for having a wrecked economy. For the United States to continue its imperialist foreign policy, and there is every sign that it intends to do so, will eventually lead to economic and social collapse.

So how can the Tea Party turn things around? It can only do so by realizing that the first thing that must be done to fix the government in Washington is for the United States to end its wars overseas and dramatically scale back on its international commitments. There is no good reason for Washington to serve as the world's policeman and many good reasons why it should cease and desist from doing so. Reason number one should be that the US muscular foreign policy has actually been helping the terrorists achieve their objectives. In October 2004 Usama bin Laden said, referring to the economic damage the US economy has sustained in the wake of 9/11, "We are continuing in the same policy to make America bleed profusely to the point of bankruptcy." The numbers alone demonstrate that bin Laden has succeeded, far beyond his wildest imaginings. Iraq alone has cost \$1 trillion and counting, 4400 Americans have died together with as many as 650,000 Iraqis. Afghanistan and Iraq continue to run a tab at \$12 billion per month, with 1,086 more American dead in Afghanistan, and global war is expanding, not contracting, as the Obama Administration contemplates increased direct involvement in Yemen, Pakistan, and the Horn of Africa.

US policies also propagate terrorism in the form of blowback. Every diplomat or intelligence officer understands that laws of physics apply in foreign affairs as much as they do in the natural sciences. When you get involved in a foreign country's internal affairs and take action against individuals or groups the action will result in a Newtonian "equal and opposite reaction." Push on one spot and something happens, sometimes half a world away. When a man attempts to blow up an SUV in Times Square or ignite a bomb in his underwear on board an airliner it is because the US is bombing and killing in places like Yemen and Pakistan. Stop one and you stop the other. As Ron Paul puts it, they are over here because we are over there. It's that simple.

And when you put an end to the American empire you can stop writing a blank check every year for the Pentagon, you can stop borrowing money to fund the wars, and you can take sensible steps to reduce the size of government, making it again answerable to the people. As the memory of the overhyped terrorist threat fades, you can even begin to restore some of those civil liberties that have been stripped away by the Patriot Acts, the Military Commissions Act, and the assertion of state secrets privilege.

Is it unimaginable that the Tea Parties might turn in that direction? Perhaps not, though much depends on the extent to which the Republican Party and people like Sarah Palin are able to co-opt the movement. If they do, the revolt will fizzle out and turn into George W. Bush revisited. What is needed is a resurgence of traditional conservatives and libertarians to make the case that it is precisely the disastrous foreign policy that is driving virtually everything that ails the United States today. This might be referred to as shifting the narrative, turning it away from the sense that there is an amorphous threat out there that has to be dealt with and towards an understanding that America's genuine security depends on a sane and cautious foreign policy that eschews meddling in other peoples' affairs.

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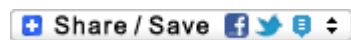
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Friday, July 23, 2010

William Collins: America Can't Afford its Empire

America Can't Afford its Empire

By William Collins [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 21, 2010 | OtherWords | AlterNet

It's a lot of work being an empire. Expensive, but well worth it. Americans make up only 4 percent of the world's population, but we get to use up 25 percent of its resources. That's pretty high living and you don't get to pull it off by being a wimpy socialist nonentity. We also get to spew 25 percent of the earth's unsustainable pollution. Sure, this all has to come to an end eventually, but no matter; it's been a great ride.

And at least it won't come to an end militarily. Our army puts Rome to shame. We have 865 foreign bases, and blanket every continent with soldiers and CIA nests. ESPN World Cup announcers "welcome our men and women in uniform serving in over 175 countries and territories." Japan hosts 47,000 of our troops, paying \$2 billion for the privilege and annoying its own citizens no end. It just ousted a prime minister over that spat.

South Korea, even closer to the front lines, harbors 37,000 U.S. troops. It's also a serious local annoyance, but nonetheless an irresistible international insurance policy. Now our navy wants an additional Korean base on Jeju Island, jutting out into the sea toward China. This would be yet another means of menacing our biggest economic competitor should it ever display dangerous military rumblings. Much of its incoming oil passes near Jeju. Also in the Pacific we're vastly upgrading our Command Headquarters in Hawaii. Just in case.

Europe doesn't really mind all this military posturing either. It gives them a cheap umbrella against any Russian or Chinese expansionism. On the other hand, they're impatient with our fixation on starting wars. The Netherlands recently lost a government over sending its troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, and Tony Blair's toadying up to George W. Bush was no small part of Labor's dramatic demise in Britain. Military shield? Yes. Wars? No.

Meanwhile Secretary of Defense Robert Gates just rebuked Europe for being too peaceful. What a putdown.

Plainly the U.S. is not shy like the European Union. Our military and CIA now have virtual carte blanche to go ahead and assassinate our enemies of the moment, wherever. Drones in Asia have long been doing this regularly and now special forces are similarly authorized to murder, at least in many parts of the Muslim world. The Israelis are old hands and presumably give us pointers. Yemen and Somalia are our current James Bond hotspots.

In addition to military bases, any empire needs management infrastructure. Thus the Mothership of World Domination is now moored in Baghdad. It's the largest embassy on earth, covering 104 acres. In true Iraq War fashion it was shoddily built by corrupt contractors, but will henceforth serve as our Middle East and Central Asia nerve center. Presently it's busy insinuating U.S. corporations into Iraq's juicy, if decayed, oil fields.

There's more too. Iraq is now viewed as Asia's rail gateway to Europe, with deepwater harbor plans being drawn for Basra and rights-of-way being organized for trains all the way from there to Germany.

But such domination can be messy. There is always stuff like having to bribe the rulers of Kyrgyzstan to keep our air base, supporting coup plotters in Honduras so as to hang onto our base there, paying Ethiopia to occupy Somalia, etc. Plus the wars. It's all so terribly expensive.

Indeed, it's the cost that will probably take our empire down one day. We have built this global fortress on financial sand. Despite our momentary debt reprieve when Europe went bust, our deficit can't keep mounting forever. One day it will force us to bring all those troops home, like it or not.

William A. Collins, an OtherWords columnist, is a former Connecticut State lawmaker and the former mayor of Norwalk.

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Thursday, July 22, 2010

[Ted Rall: Protofascism Comes to America](#)

Protofascism Comes to America

The Rise of the Tea Party

by Ted Rall [article link](#)

July 22, 2010 | CommonDreams

Is the Tea Party racist? Democrats who play liberals on TV say it isn't. Vice President Joe Biden says the Tea Party "is not a racist organization" per se, but allows that "at least elements that were involved in some of the Tea Party folks expressed racist views."

Right-wing Congresswoman Michele Bachmann has received permission to form an official Tea Party Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives. It's official. The Tea Party matters.

So: is it racist? Certainly a sizeable minority of Tea Partiers' "take America back" rhetoric is motivated by thinly disguised resentment that a black guy is president. As for the remainder, their tacit tolerance of the intolerant speaks for itself. "Take America back" from whom? You know whom. It ain't white CEOs.

Yes. The Tea Party is racist. Obviously.

But racism is only one facet of a far more sinister political strain. It's more accurate to categorize the Tea Party as something the United States has never seen before, certainly not in such large numbers or as widespread.

The Tea Party is a protofascist movement.

[Robert O. Paxton](#) defined fascism as "a form of political behavior marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity, energy and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion."

Typical Tea Party rants fit the classic fascist mold in several respects. America, Tea Partiers complain, is falling behind. Like Hitler, they blame leftists and liberals for a "stab in the back," treason on the homefront. The trappings of hypernationalism--flags, bunting, etc.--are notably pervasive at Tea Party rallies, even by American standards. We see "collaboration with traditional elites"--Rush Limbaugh, Congressmen, Republican Party bigwigs (including the most recent vice presidential nominee)--to an extent that is unprecedented in recent history.

Tea Partiers haven't called for extralegal solutions to the problems they cite--but neither did the National Socialists prior to 1933. Then again, they're not in power yet. Wait.

One major component is missing: aggressive militarism. Certainly most Tea Partiers support America's wars and the troops who fight them. But Tea Partiers focus on domestic issues. Similarly, the Nazis didn't make much of their aggressive intent until after they seized power.

Because it has no central leadership and because it's easier to attract new members if you never say anything specific enough to turn anyone off, ideological vagueness is a defining characteristic of the Tea Party movement. Indeed, ideological imprecision tends to increase as you move from left to right on the political spectrum.

On the left, communists are specific to a fault. (This is why the Left is factionalized.) Programmes, five-year plans and one tract after another are the (increasingly boring) order of the day under socialism. Moving right, bourgeois organizations such as the two major U.S. political parties have platform planks and principles, but tend to be mushy and flexible. As we move to the far right, as under Hitler, ideas become grand, sweeping, meaningless slogans (take the nation back! death to the traitors!). What should be done is nominally whatever needs doing (i.e., whatever the Leader orders).

Umberto Eco's 1995 essay "Eternal Fascism" [article follows this post -MMr] describes the cult of action for its own sake under fascist regimes and movements: "Action being beautiful in itself, it must be taken before, or without, reflection. Thinking is a form of emasculation."

Note Republican Senator John Cornyn's choice of words when he defended Tea Partiers against charges of racism: "I think it's slanderous to suggest the vast movement of citizens who have gotten off the couch and showed up at town hall meetings and Tea Party events, somehow to smear them with this label, there's just no basis for it."

Tea Partiers deserve praise for having gotten "off the couch." They've shown up. That's what matters! Never mind that they're stupid. Never mind that many--those who get quoted in the media, anyway--are painfully ignorant and uneducated.

As an added bonus, Senator Cornyn's statement both demonstrates "effective collaboration with traditional elites" and another entry from Eco's checklist: "Disagreement is treason." Or slander. Whichever Ann Coulter book title floats your boat.

Eco also discusses fascism's "appeal to a frustrated middle class, a class suffering from an economic crisis or feelings of political humiliation, and frightened by the pressure of lower social groups." Guard the borders! Deport the immigrants! Mexicans are stealing our jobs!

So much anger. It's too bad that the (justifiable) rage of the white male middle-class is directed against their fellow victims. It's worse that they're playing into the blood-soaked hands of their own oppressors.

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Ted Rall is the author of the new book "[*Silk Road to Ruin: Is Central Asia the New Middle East?*](#)," and "*The Anti-American Manifesto*," to be published in September by Seven Stories Press. His website is tedrall.com.

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O.K., So Tea Party Members Aren't "Racist" - They're Just Prejudiced and Bigoted

by: Dr. Wilmer J. Leon III [article link](#)

22 July 2010 | t r u t h o u t | Op-Ed

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By Paul Kruger [article link](#)

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Umberto Eco: Eternal Fascism: Fourteen Ways of Looking at a Blackshirt

Eternal Fascism: Fourteen Ways of Looking at a Blackshirt

By Umberto Eco [article link](#) [article link](#)

Writing in New York Review of Books, 22 June 1995, pp.12-15. Excerpted in Utne Reader, November-December 1995, pp. 57-59.

The following version follows the text and formatting of the Utne Reader article, and in addition, makes the first sentence of each numbered point a statement in bold type. Italics are in the original.

For the full article, consult the New York Review of Books, [purchase the full article online](#); or purchase Eco's new collection of essays: Five Moral Pieces.

In spite of some fuzziness regarding the difference between various historical forms of fascism, I think it is possible to outline a list of features that are typical of what I would like to call Ur-Fascism, or Eternal Fascism. These features cannot be organized into a system; many of them contradict each other, and are also typical of other kinds of despotism or fanaticism. But it is enough that one of them be present to allow fascism to coagulate around it.

* * *

1. The first feature of Ur-Fascism is the *cult of tradition*.

Traditionalism is of course much older than fascism. Not only was it typical of counterrevolutionary Catholic thought after the French revolution, but it was born in the late Hellenistic era, as a reaction to classical Greek rationalism. In the Mediterranean basin, people of different religions (most of the faiths indulgently accepted by the Roman pantheon) started dreaming of a revelation received at the dawn of human history. This revelation, according to the traditionalist mystique, had remained for a long time concealed under the veil of forgotten languages -- in Egyptian hieroglyphs, in the Celtic runes, in the scrolls of the little-known religions of Asia.

This new culture had to be *syncretistic*. Syncretism is not only, as the dictionary says, "the combination of different forms of belief or practice;" such a combination must tolerate contradictions. Each of the original messages contains a sliver of wisdom, and although they seem to say different or incompatible things, they all are nevertheless alluding, allegorically, to the same primeval truth.

As a consequence, there can be no advancement of learning. Truth already has been spelled out once and for all, and we can only keep interpreting its obscure message.

If you browse in the shelves that, in American bookstores, are labeled New Age, you can find there even Saint Augustine, who, as far as I know, was not a fascist. But combining Saint Augustine and Stonehenge -- that is a symptom of Ur-Fascism.

2. Traditionalism implies the *rejection of modernism*.

Both Fascists and Nazis worshipped technology, while traditionalist thinkers usually reject it as a negation of traditional spiritual values. However, even though Nazism was proud of its industrial achievements, its praise of modernism was only the surface of an ideology based upon blood and earth (*Blut und Boden*). The rejection of the modern world was disguised as a rebuttal of the capitalistic way of life. The Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, is seen as the beginning of modern depravity. In this sense Ur-Fascism can be defined as *irrationalism*.

3. Irrationalism also depends on the cult of *action for action's sake*.

Action being beautiful in itself, it must be taken before, or without, reflection. Thinking is a form of emasculation.

Therefore culture is suspect insofar as it is identified with critical attitudes. Distrust of the intellectual world has always been a symptom of Ur-Fascism, from Hermann Goering's fondness for a phrase from a Hanns Johst play ("When I hear the word 'culture' I reach for my gun") to the frequent use of such expressions as "degenerate intellectuals," "eggheads," "effete snobs," and "universities are nests of reds." The official Fascist intellectuals were mainly engaged in attacking modern culture and the liberal intelligentsia for having betrayed traditional values.

4. The critical spirit makes distinctions, and to distinguish is a sign of modernism.

In modern culture the scientific community praises disagreement as a way to improve knowledge. For Ur-Fascism, disagreement is treason.

5. Besides, disagreement is a sign of diversity.

Ur-Fascism grows up and seeks consensus by exploiting and exacerbating the natural *fear of difference*. The first appeal of a fascist or prematurely fascist movement is an appeal against the intruders. Thus Ur-Fascism is racist by definition.

6. Ur-Fascism derives from individual or social frustration.

That is why one of the most typical features of the historical fascism was the *appeal to a frustrated middle class*, a class suffering from an economic crisis or feelings of political humiliation, and frightened by the pressure of lower social groups. In our time, when the old "proletarians" are becoming petty bourgeois (and the lumpen are largely excluded from the political scene), the fascism of tomorrow will find its audience in this new majority.

7. To people who feel deprived of a clear social identity, Ur-Fascism says that their only privilege is the most common one, to be born in the same country.

This is the origin of nationalism. Besides, the only ones who can provide an identity to the nation are its enemies. Thus at the root of the Ur-Fascist psychology there is the *obsession with a plot*, possibly an international one. The followers must feel besieged. The easiest way to solve the plot is the appeal to xenophobia. But the plot must also come from the inside: Jews are usually the best target because they have the advantage of being at the same time inside and outside. In the United States, a prominent instance of the plot obsession is to be found in Pat Robertson's *The New World Order*, but, as we have recently seen, there are many others.

8. The followers must feel *humiliated by the ostentatious wealth and force of their enemies*.

When I was a boy I was taught to think of Englishmen as the five-meal people. They ate more frequently than the poor but sober Italians. Jews are rich and help each other through a secret web of mutual assistance. However, the followers of Ur-Fascism must also be convinced that they can overwhelm the enemies. Thus, by a continuous shifting of rhetorical focus, the enemies are at the same time too strong and too weak. Fascist governments are condemned to lose wars because they are constitutionally incapable of objectively evaluating the force of the enemy.

9. For Ur-Fascism there is no struggle for life but, rather, life is lived for struggle.

Thus *pacifism is trafficking with the enemy*. It is bad because *life is permanent warfare*. This, however, brings about an Armageddon complex. Since enemies have to be defeated, there must be a final battle, after which the movement will have control of the world. But such "final solutions" implies a further era of peace, a Golden Age, which contradicts the principle of permanent war. No fascist leader has ever succeeded in solving this predicament.

10. Elitism is a typical aspect of any reactionary ideology, insofar as it is fundamentally aristocratic, and aristocratic and militaristic elitism cruelly implies *contempt for the weak*.

Ur-Fascism can only advocate a popular elitism. Every citizen belongs to the best people in the world, the members or the party are the best among the citizens, every citizen can (or ought to) become a member of the party. But there cannot be

patricians without plebeians. In fact, the Leader, knowing that his power was not delegated to him democratically but was conquered by force, also knows that his force is based upon the weakness of the masses; they are so weak as to need and deserve a ruler.

11. In such a perspective *everybody is educated to become a hero*.

In every mythology the hero is an exceptional being, but in Ur-Fascist ideology heroism is the norm. This cult of heroism is strictly linked with the cult of death. It is not by chance that a motto of the Spanish Falangists was *Viva la Muerte* ("Long Live Death!"). In nonfascist societies, the lay public is told that death is unpleasant but must be faced with dignity; believers are told that it is the painful way to reach a supernatural happiness. By contrast, the Ur-Fascist hero craves heroic death, advertised as the best reward for a heroic life. The Ur-Fascist hero is impatient to die. In his impatience, he more frequently sends other people to death.

12. Since both permanent war and heroism are difficult games to play, *the Ur-Fascist transfers his will to power to sexual matters*.

This is the origin of machismo (which implies both disdain for women and intolerance and condemnation of nonstandard sexual habits, from chastity to homosexuality). Since even sex is a difficult game to play, the Ur-Fascist hero tends to play with weapons -- doing so becomes an ersatz phallic exercise.

13. Ur-Fascism is based upon a *selective populism*, a qualitative populism, one might say.

In a democracy, the citizens have individual rights, but the citizens in their entirety have a political impact only from a quantitative point of view -- one follows the decisions of the majority. For Ur-Fascism, however, individuals as individuals have no rights, and the People is conceived as a quality, a monolithic entity expressing the Common Will. Since no large quantity of human beings can have a common will, the Leader pretends to be their interpreter. Having lost their power of delegation, citizens do not act; they are only called on to play the role of the People. Thus the People is only a theatrical fiction. There is in our future a TV or Internet populism, in which the emotional response of a selected group of citizens can be presented and accepted as the Voice of the People.

Because of its qualitative populism, Ur-Fascism must be *against "rotten" parliamentary governments*. Wherever a politician casts doubt on the legitimacy of a parliament because it no longer represents the Voice of the People, we can smell Ur-Fascism.

14. *Ur-Fascism speaks Newspeak*.

Newspeak was invented by Orwell, in Nineteen Eighty-Four, as the official language of what he called Ingsoc, English Socialism. But elements of Ur-Fascism are common to different forms of dictatorship. All the Nazi or Fascist schoolbooks made use of an impoverished vocabulary, and an elementary syntax, in order to limit the instruments for complex and critical reasoning. But we must be ready to identify other kinds of Newspeak, even if they take the apparently innocent form of a popular talk show.

* * *

Ur-Fascism is still around us, sometimes in plainclothes. It would be so much easier for us if there appeared on the world scene somebody saying, "I want to reopen Auschwitz, I want the Blackshirts to parade again in the Italian squares." Life is not that simple. Ur-Fascism can come back under the most innocent of disguises. Our duty is to uncover it and to point our finger at any of its new instances — every day, in every part of the world. Franklin Roosevelt's words of November 4, 1938, are worth recalling: "If American democracy ceases to move forward as a living force, seeking day and night by peaceful means to better the lot of our citizens, fascism will grow in strength in our land." Freedom and liberation are an unending task.

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Robert C. Koehler: The Secrecy State

The Secrecy State

by Robert C. Koehler [article link](#)

July 22, 2010 | CommonDreams

Under the I-hate-government, let's-drown-it-in-the-bathtub administration of George Bush and Dick Cheney, the Secrecy State swelled to such enormous proportions it required more than a dozen investigative journalists from the Washington Post two years to fathom its size and shape.

In our otherwise financially bankrupt society, where we can afford virtually nothing that actually helps people, money is no object in the Secrecy State. Thus in the name of national security, as Dana Priest and William M. Arkin tell us in "[Top Secret America](#)," their harrowing tale of government gone wild, 1,271 government organizations and 1,931 private companies are currently in the homeland security, counterterrorism and intelligence game.

These agencies either expanded their operations vastly or sprang anew from the head of Zeus (I mean Cheney) in the wake of 9/11, when secret government, like torture, bloomed:

"At least 20 percent of the government organizations that exist to fend off terrorist threats were established or refashioned in the wake of 9/11," Priest and Arkin write in their investigative series, which began Sunday in the Post. "Many that existed before the attacks grew to historic proportions as the Bush administration and Congress gave agencies more money than they were capable of responsibly spending."

Some 854,000 people, according to the article, now hold top-secret security clearances. They generate and recirculate more data than anybody has the least idea what to do with. The NSA, for instance, intercepts 1.7 *billion* e-mails, phone calls and other communications every single day. And it's highly debatable, as the writers point out repeatedly, whether we're the least bit safer because of it; indeed, the government's massive harvest of classified data seems to jam the wheels of government more than anything else, burying significant bits of information amid reams of trivia.

The Post does an admirable job detailing the staggering dimensions of the Secrecy State, but I find myself, as I read about it, assaulted with questions the article doesn't take on, beginning, of course, with the legitimacy of "counterterrorism" in the first place, at least as an overweening preoccupation of government. Another term for it is paranoia, and it ain't healthy.

If nothing else, its rationality is deeply flawed. An enormous subdivision of the military-industrial complex - including, as Arkin told Amy Goodman on Democracy Now!, "the powerhouses in the defense industry . . . Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics" - has emerged for the purpose of global data extraction on the assumption that America's enemies exist in objective independence from our own activities: that our national security is more a function of intercepting a whispered plot to cause harm than, say, curtailing our own murder of civilians in the war on terror.

The imploding intelligence industry - of which torture is one piece - is the hidden side of the war on terror (the war to promote terror), and another manifestation, so it strikes me, of our unexamined urge to play God. "Man must be insane," wrote French Renaissance essayist Michel de Montaigne. "He can't make a worm, but he makes gods by the dozens." And in the nation-state we have the ultimate faux-triumph of our lunacy: a stumbling sociopath that is, or strives to be, both all-powerful and all-knowing.

The money we've poured into the intelligence industry in the last decade - expanding exponentially the worst excesses of the Cold War - has done more than gum up the wheels of government. It has usurped much of what remained of its legitimacy. The more secrets the government keeps from us, the less it belongs to us. In the Secrecy State, no one extols the value of openness. But a government that isn't open is not a democracy.

What, indeed, are these secrets that only insiders have access to? How much do they concern legitimate, and temporary, matters of national security, and how much do they merely shield unsavory truths about the status quo? How much secrecy, in other words, is of the CYA variety?

Consider, for instance, one of the most high-profile security breaches of recent months: the WikiLeaks release of a classified video showing a U.S. Apache helicopter crew strafing Iraqi civilians on a Baghdad street, killing a dozen, including two Reuters journalists, and laughing in eerie moral disconnection from what they've just done ("Oh yeah, look at those dead bastards").

A 22-year-old Army intelligence analyst, Pfc. Bradley Manning, the apparently conscience-stricken whistleblower who passed the video on to WikiLeaks, has recently been [charged](#) with 12 counts of illegal dissemination of classified data - just about the most heinous crime it's possible to commit in the Secrecy State. It's far worse, for instance, than merely killing or torturing civilians.

But in the larger world beyond the Secrecy State, where words like "democracy" and "conscience" carry more weight than "classified," he's a truth teller and a hero. Without such people, the secret government, the private government, will do nothing but grow.

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Wednesday, July 21, 2010

[Jeremy Scahill: Corporate Media Discover Private Spies](#)

Corporate Media Discover Private Spies. In Other News, No WMD in Iraq

by Jeremy Scahill [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 21, 2010 | The Nation | CommonDreams

Stop the presses and call the government spokespeople back from Martha's Vineyard. The corporate media have discovered that the United States is radically outsourcing national security and sensitive intelligence operations. Cable news channels breathlessly report on the "groundbreaking," "exclusive" *Washington Post* series, [Top Secret America](#), a two-year investigation by Dana Priest and William Arkin. No doubt there is some important stuff in this series. Both Arkin and Priest have done outstanding work for many years on sensitive, life-or-death subjects. And that is one of the main reasons why this series has, thus far, been incredibly disappointing. Its greatest accomplishment is forcing a discussion onto corporate TV years after it would have had an actual impact.

The misplaced hype surrounding the *Post* series speaks volumes to the ahistorical nature of US media culture. Next week, if the *New York Times* published a story on how there were no WMDs in Iraq, there would no doubt be cable news shows that would act like it was an earth-moving revelation delivered by Moses on the stone tablet of exclusive, groundbreaking journalism.

The *Post* does a fine job of exploring the scope of the privatization and providing some new or updated statistics. It also produces a few zingers from senior officials like Defense Secretary Robert Gates. "This is a terrible confession," Gates said [in Tuesday's installment](#). "I can't get a number on how many contractors work for the Office of the Secretary of Defense." It was also hilarious to read CIA director Leon Panetta—who just gave Blackwater a brand new [\\$100 million global CIA contract](#)—act like he is anything other than a contractor addict. "For too long, we've depended on contractors to do the operational work that ought to be done" by CIA employees, Panetta told the *Post*. But replacing them "doesn't happen overnight. When you've been dependent on contractors for so long, you have to build that expertise over time." Panetta told the *Post* he was concerned about contracting with corporations, whose responsibility "is to their shareholders, and that does present an inherent conflict." I wonder if the Blackwater guys working for Panetta can contain their laughter reading those statements. I imagine them taping a post-it note that says "Kick me" on Panetta's back and then chuckling about it with the Lockheed contractors.

The *Post* is "doing their best to obfuscate what contractors really do for US intelligence. They're eight years behind and still haven't caught up.... there's virtually nothing in their series about the broader picture—like what it means to have private for-profit companies operating at the highest levels of our national security."

What is perhaps most telling about the *Post* series is how little detail is provided on the most sensitive operations performed by contractors: assassinations, torture, rendition and operational planning.

In reality, there is little in the *Post* series that, in one way or another, has not already been documented by independent journalist [Tim Shorrock](#), author of the (actually) groundbreaking book, [Spies for Hire: The Secret World of Intelligence Outsourcing](#). With the exception of some details and a lot of color, much of what I have read in the *Post's* series thus far I had already read in Shorrock's book and his previous reporting for [Salon](#), [Mother Jones](#) and [The Nation](#). Shorrock was the reporter who first revealed the extent of the radical privatization of intel operations. In 2007, Shorrock [obtained and published](#) a document from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence showing that 70 percent of the US intelligence budget was spent on private contractors. Shorrock was way out in front of this story and, frankly, corporate media ignored it. When I was working on my book on Blackwater, which first came out in 2007, Shorrock provided me with some crucial insights into the world of privatized intelligence. Shorrock remains a valued colleague and source and the *Post* is just wrong to not credit him for the work he has done on this story. Everyone should read Shorrock's [latest story](#) which includes an exclusive photo tour through the private intelligence community.

The *Post* and its reporters, Shorrock told me, "are doing their best to obfuscate what contractors really do for US intelligence. They're eight years behind and still haven't caught up. Basically their stories are throwing big numbers at readers-such as the fact that of 854,000 people with top security clearances, 265,000 are contractors. But that's work that can be done by interns; there's virtually nothing in their series about the broader picture-like what it means to have private for-profit companies operating at the highest levels of our national security."

Much of the series reads like a description of the mundane work of analysts and IT people with the types of stats Shorrock mentioned thrown in. Of course, it is meant to feel insider-ish to read the description of the General Dynamics contractor tracking a white pick-up truck in Afghanistan suspected of being "part of a network making roadside bombs" and with a few clicks of the mouse revealing the history of the vehicle, the address and identity of the driver and a list of visitors to his house. But what about the ultra-sensitive work contractors do for the NSA or the highly secretive National Reconnaissance Office? "It's very significant that, in their database, [the *Post*] eliminated information about what key contractors do for the agencies such as NSA," says Shorrock. "There's tons of data about these companies in their database, but not what they actually do." (People wanting more information on contractors doing this work, such as Booz-Allen, SAIC, Northrop Grumman and others should check out the [contractor database](#) Shorrock developed with CorpWatch last year.)

Also, what about the contractors who have tortured prisoners, flown rendition flights and participated in lethal "direct actions" ie assassination operations?

According to the July 20 [article](#) in the *Post's* series: "Private contractors working for the CIA have recruited spies in Iraq, paid bribes for information in Afghanistan and protected CIA directors visiting world capitals. Contractors have helped snatch a suspected extremist off the streets of Italy, interrogated detainees once held at secret prisons abroad and watched over defectors holed up in the Washington suburbs. At Langley headquarters, they analyze terrorist networks. At the agency's training facility in Virginia, they are helping mold a new generation of American spies.... Contractors kill enemy fighters. They spy on foreign governments and eavesdrop on terrorist networks. They help craft war plans. They gather information on local factions in war zones."

Wow, an engaged reader might think after reading that, this will be fascinating. Now we are getting somewhere. But instead of revealing new details on these types of operations and naming names and employers and specific incidents, none of that is to be found. The discussion of torture and extrajudicial killings committed by private contractors is relegated to a whitewashing by the *Post*. "**Contractor misdeeds** in Iraq and Afghanistan have hurt U.S. credibility in those countries as well as in the Middle East," Priest and Arkin write. "Abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, some of it done by contractors, **helped ignite a call for vengeance** against the United States that continues today. Security guards working for Blackwater **added fuel to the five-year violent chaos in Iraq** and became the **symbol of an America run amok**." [Emphases added.]

I'm sorry, Blackwater "added fuel" to "chaos?" "America run amok?" These are very strange descriptions of the take-away message from the massacre of seventeen innocent Iraqi civilians, the alleged murder of a bodyguard to the Iraqi vice president and night-hunting Iraqis as "payback" for 9/11. Not to mention the allegations of young prostitutes performing oral sex for a dollar, guns smuggled on private planes in dog food bags, hiding weapons from ATF agents and on and on. But more important, where in the *Post* series is the examination of the CIA assassination program that relied on Blackwater and other private contractors? Where is the investigation of Erik Prince's hit teams that operated in Germany and elsewhere? What about the ongoing work of contractors in the drone bombing program? What about Blackwater contractors [calling in air-strikes](#) in Afghanistan or [operating covertly](#) in Pakistan?

Also, since when is torturing prisoners a "misdeed?" According to the *Post*, torture at Abu Ghraib "helped to ignite a call for vengeance against the United States." This type of vapid description of the consequences of heinous crimes committed by America and its proxies has become like daily bread in corporate media outlets. The *Post's* focus on the calls for vengeance rather than the incredible uphill quest for justice in the US courts by the victims of this torture is telling. As is the total omission of the other torture facilities employed by the United States-some of which were revealed first by Dana Priest and the *Washington Post*.

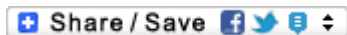
[Marcy Wheeler](#)--another unfamous journalist who rarely gets credit from the corporate all-stars when she scoops them--[described](#) this aspect of the *Post* story on her EmptyWheel blog: "Abuse of prisoners happened. But apparently, only at Abu Ghraib, not at Bagram, not at Gitmo, not at firebases where detainees died. And the names of those contractors? Their role in the abuse? The WaPo stops short of telling you, for example, that a CACI interrogator was the one instructing the grunts at Abu Ghraib to abuse detainees. The WaPo also doesn't tell you the CACI contractors never paid any price for doing so. The WaPo doesn't mention that DOD believed they had no way of holding contractors accountable for such things (though the case of David Passaro, in which a detainee died, of course proved that contractors could be prosecuted)."

Perhaps the *Post* plans to publish a story called "Top Top Super Duper Triple-Decker Secret America" where the paper actually delves deep into the outsourcing of assassinations, torture, rendition, interrogation and "find fix and finish" operations. That would truly be ground-breaking. Until then, buy Tim Shorrock's [book](#) and read [Marcy Wheeler](#).

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Jeremy Scahill is the author of the New York Times bestseller [Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army](#). He is currently a Puffin Foundation Writing Fellow at the Nation Institute.

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[**Amy Goodman: Deficit Doves**](#)

Deficit Doves

by Amy Goodman [article link](#) [article link](#)
July 21, 2010 | TruthDig | CommonDreams

Getting out of the red is the new black. Deficit hawks have swooped down on the U.S. budget. This week, they attacked unemployment benefits.

Ultimately, they are going after Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid, the venerable programs once considered untouchable "third rails" of U.S. politics. These have been replaced by a new third rail, the defense budget. To really deal with annual deficits and a surging national debt, we are going to need to cut military spending.

We need some deficit doves.

First, let's call it what it is: the war budget. The government formed the Department of War in 1789, and only in 1949 renamed it the Department of Defense. The war budget President Barack Obama recently sent to Congress, for fiscal year 2011, is \$548.9 billion, with an additional \$33 billion, which is the 2010 supplemental that is currently being debated in Congress, and \$159.3 billion more "to support ongoing overseas contingency operations, including funds to execute the President's new strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan." Recall, "overseas contingency operations" is how the Obama administration rebranded the "global war on terror."

This is just the publicly available war budget. There is also a "black budget," kept secret, for clandestine operations that former Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair revealed was about \$75 billion. As The Washington Post exposed this week, the post-9/11 security state has grown into a massive, unmanageable and largely privatized "enterprise."

Over 2,000 for-profit firms and over 850,000 people with top-secret clearance are engaged in military and intelligence activities, ostensibly for the U.S. government, with seemingly little or no oversight.

Rep. Alan Grayson, D-Fla., has submitted a bill, H.R. 5353, called "The War Is Making You Poor Act." Grayson, with a few Republicans and a number of progressive Democratic co-sponsors, wants to force Commander in Chief Obama to run his two wars with "only" the \$548.9 billion base budget. The \$159.3 billion saved would be turned into a tax break, making the first \$35,000 of income tax-free, and anything left over would be directed to paying down the national debt. The bill is in committee now and may generate genuine bipartisan support. Grayson, when introducing the bill, highlighted a fact worth repeating: The U.S. war budget is greater than the military spending of every other nation on Earth, combined.

Meanwhile, at the National Peace Conference to be held in Albany, N.Y., this weekend, people are targeting the military budget. Students are organizing around the connection between war expenditures and education budgets that are being slashed, sparking protests at campuses nationwide. Another effort, called "[Bring Our War Dollars Home](#)," promotes action at the city council and statehouse level, along with grass-roots campaigns to pressure members of Congress to stop funding war.

The cost of the Iraq war was estimated by Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, with his colleague Linda Bilmes, at \$3 trillion, calculating not only hard, current costs, but also the cost to society of caring for wounded veterans, and the long-term costs of having so many families disrupted by caring for their injured loved ones, or having a breadwinner killed in action. And that's just Iraq. As of May, the monthly cost of the war in Afghanistan surpassed, for the first time, the cost of war in Iraq.

Stiglitz was one of the many economists who said the economic stimulus package (at \$787 billion) was too small. He argues that deficit spending, when done wisely, creates long-term returns for an economy.

Conversely, he wrote recently, "Deficits to finance wars or give-aways to the financial sector ... impos[e] a burden on future generations."

Economist Dean Baker of the Center for Economic and Policy Research says President Obama's Deficit Commission, formally the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, is a major cause for concern. The co-chairs are former Republican Sen. Alan Simpson and Democrat Erskine Bowles, who is on the board of Morgan Stanley, one of the bailed-out Wall Street firms. Baker told me: "Both are on record saying they want to cut Social Security. This should have people very, very worried. That isn't a balanced commission."

Cutting Social Security isn't the answer. Cutting war spending, and bringing the troops home, is. This is the job for the deficit doves.

Denis Moynihan contributed research to this column.

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Amy Goodman is the host of "[Democracy Now!](#)," a daily international TV/radio news hour airing on 800 stations in North America. She was awarded the 2008 Right Livelihood Award, dubbed the "Alternative Nobel" prize, and received the award in the Swedish Parliament in December.

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Tuesday, July 20, 2010

Cindy Sheehan: Requiem for the Antiwar Movement

Requiem for the Antiwar Movement

By Cindy Sheehan [article link](#) [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 9, 2010 | Soapbox | Global Research | ICH

“When you vote for war, don't be surprised when you get it.” Cindy Sheehan

“I will send at least two additional combat brigades to Afghanistan.” Presidential Candidate Barack Obama

“This war (Iraq) prevents us from tackling every serious threat that we face, from a resurgent al-Qaeda in Afghanistan to a hostile Iranian regime intent on possessing nuclear weapons.” Candidate Barack Obama

“And if we have actionable intelligence about high-level al-Qaeda targets (in Pakistan), we must act if Pakistan will or cannot.” Candidate Barack Obama

This article and these observations are going to piss some people off—but oh well. You will be angry with me, even though I am not the one who is ordering more war, paying for more war, torturing people and imprisoning them without due process, destroying the economy and the environment, blah, blah, blah. I have developed an incredibly thick skin and if I rankle, it's because I think time is running out to halt the disastrous trajectory this planet (via the US Military Corporate Complex) is on. I promise that I am not writing this because I am holding protests and no one is coming—these thoughts have been percolating in me for months now. (Note: Remember that old saying: “What if they gave a war and nobody came?” Well, here in DC I am living the opposite: “What if they gave an antiwar protest and nobody came?”)

My grandbabies and other people's grandbabies WILL NOT live in a world where war for profit is so normal that state-sanctioned violence is rarely even questioned—and if it is, then the person questioning is the “looney tunes,” the “mama moonbat,” the “radical.” That is one seriously messed-up world. You know it is and we are the only ones who have the key to unmessing it.

Last week, the Democratically controlled House of Representatives voted to give Barack Obama 33 billion more dollars to prosecute two idiotic and ill-advised wars. Of course they did—it wasn't the first time since 2007 that a Democratic Congress voted to fund wars, and it won't be the last—do you all know why? BECAUSE THE DEMOCRATS DON'T WANT PEACE—THEY ARE JUST ONE-HALF OF THE “WAR PARTY.”

Why else did the Democrats vote for more war, more death and more destruction? If you are a Democrat and voted for one of these scum—did you vote for them hoping that you would get more war? Did you vote for Obama hoping that he would dig this country into a deeper hole, and do you still believe that fucking things up even more is the way to solve problems?

Do you all know what else? The wars that were begun in the Bush presidency and fully funded and increased during the Obama regime belong to everyone who voted for Obama, too. If you listened to what Obama said, and not just how he said it, then you would have heard him promise you that he was going to SEND MORE TROOPS TO AFGHANISTAN. You would have heard him say that nothing was “off the table” for dealing with Iran.

During the campaign, many colleagues and friends of mine, assured me that Obama was just saying this hostile crap to “get elected” and once he was elected that he would “do the right thing.” Well, first of all, why support such a pandering Jackwagon, and secondly, how has that ever worked? Three days after Obama swore to uphold and defend the Constitution, he drone-bombed a “target” in Pakistan killing 3 dozen civilians—and since that day he has elevated the art of drone bombings to new heights, while the so-called antiwar movement looks on in silent complacency and while Democratic operatives disguised as antiwar groups are hoping against hope that Obama comes out strong with a new antiwar marketing campaign to assure his “re-election.” Even though not one progressive issue has been propagated during his term, these war supporters are looking forward to another four years of the dance of death. Right foot kill—left foot torture—spin around

for environmental devastation—allemande left for health care fascism—and shimmy right for bankster bailouts. Wasn't eight years of this crap during the Bush stain enough for y'all?

Many antiwar groups and people who claim they are for peace lose their minds during election season thinking that the razor-thin difference between the Democrat and Republican is enough to go ape-shit crazy in working for the Democrat. Just take the last two Democratic candidates, for example. Kerry and Obama both supported more war. An "antiwar" movement de-legitimizes itself when it works hard for a candidate who does not promise total and rapid withdrawal of troops from wherever they happen to be at the time AND does not promise to end war as an imperial tool of corporate conquest.

The majority of the so-called antiwar movement, in fact, voted for a candidate that PROMISED to contract one war only to be able to profoundly EXPAND another. Obama all along said that he is not against all war, just "dumb wars." If there existed an antiwar movement that had integrity—it would have said that "all wars are dumb," and we withhold our support for just another dyed-in-the-wool warmonger.

What do we do now that we have another two and a half years of a hawk who thinks it is just hunky-dory that his supporters are under the delusion that he is a dove—he was awarded the war-establishment's highest prize wasn't he? He is, after all, a Nobel Laureate.

First of all, voting just doesn't cut it. Realistically, our choices are between War Party Candidate A and War Party Candidate B. A true peace candidate is marginalized, metaphorically spat upon, and reviled. This is not a nation that honors peace and non-violence. From the top down, we are a violent nation—so from the bottom up, we have to restructure society. Liberate yourself and remove your Obama bumper sticker that has a peace sign instead of the "O." If you are antiwar, you know in your heart that he is not a peace monger.

Secondly, our resources and energy are stretched thin. We live in a credit based economy where good jobs are scarce. Many people, who have the same values, in this almost value-free society, constantly tell me that they would be with me if they could afford it.

Since my son was killed, which was as violent of a paradigm shift as anyone should have to endure, I have whittled my life down to a bare minimum. I have no car. I have no pets. I have no plants. I have no credit cards. My income is based on my donations from my itinerant peace travels and book sales. I have moved eight times since Casey died and now I can move with one small u-haul. I have a cell phone and computer, a bed, clothes, a few dishes, a few valued books and peace paraphernalia and pictures of my children and grandbabies.

As HD Thoreau said: "You don't own your possessions, they own you." This consumer orgiastic society makes us literal slaves to a system that is detrimental to our health. Freeing oneself from those chains frees one to be a full-time, or near full-time activist. "Simplify, simplify, simplify."

Massive antiwar protest in this country is dead. We may as well acknowledge that and just bury the corpse, mourn, and then figure out a better way of doing things.

In the Christian tradition, death was only a prelude to new and better life and farmers well tell you that a seed has to die before a health-nourishing plant can be born and then there's the ever ubiquitous example of the ugly, hairy, and yucky caterpillar being reborn as a magnificent and beautiful butterfly. Have I hammered you with enough clichés yet?

The key to turning this caterpillar of a country into a beautiful butterfly is in Peace and recognizing that no matter if one is Bush, Obama, McCain or Palin—these people don't want Peace, but we do.

I think we lose the raw humanity of war when we allow ourselves to wallow in War Party politics. When the Democratic Wing of the War Party took over the mis-management of the Empire, the anti-war movement was effectively neutralized even though the wars weren't.

So after we are done mourning, we get together as one human family to organize something that will bring positive change. We are not enemies with each other—we may be “enemies of the state,” but the state is our enemy.

No more marching in circles, it makes us dizzy.

No more signing petitions, it gives us writer’s cramp.

No more calling Congress-scum, the war machine is its master.

The establishment wants us to think that this busy-work has a chance to be effective—but when is the last time any of these tactics worked on a Federal level? Your president or your congress rep couldn’t care less what you think or want. Your vote doesn’t even count—in case you haven’t heard, they steal votes and falsely manipulate you, anyway.

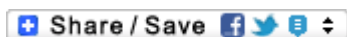
I am going to close with my organization’s motivational quote. [Peace of the Action](#) takes our inspiration from a [Mario Savio](#) quote that he said on the steps of Sproul Hall at UC Berkeley, 46 years ago:

“There comes a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart that you can’t take part, you can’t even passively take part. You have to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the levers, upon all the apparatus and you’ve got to make it stop. And you’ve got to indicate to the people who own it, to the people who run it, that unless you’re free, the machine will be prevented from working at all.”

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[Randall Amster: Hello, America? This is Your Wakeup Call](#)

Hello, America? This is Your Wakeup Call

by Randall Amster [article link](#)

July 20, 2010 | CommonDreams

There are cracks in the earth and holes in our hearts. The gusher in the Gulf has dramatized in gut-wrenching fashion a set of values and outcomes that comprise the underlying foundation of our lives. This is no “reality TV” episode, even though the already-diluted news coverage increasingly makes everything appear that way. No, this is “real reality” -- an edgy, in-your-face, unexpurgated reminder of what we have relentlessly wrought on the planet and ourselves. The question now is whether it will be enough of a wakeup call to prompt us to shake out the cobwebs, roll up our collective sleeves, and steer the entire enterprise away from the precipice.

Early returns are not favorable, both for stopping the oil gusher (it is not a spill, dammit!) and for Americans snapping out of their doldrums and getting off the petro-sauce. Drilling into Mother Earth at all is sinful in some cultural frameworks, but doing so a mile beneath the ocean with no mitigation plan on hand is simply stupid. Trying to then improvise various “kills” (aptly named though they might be) after the inevitable disaster occurs has the now-realized potential to further exacerbate the problem -- all based on the innately flawed logic of “more meddling will solve our misguided meddling.”

Yet this logic effectively summarizes a baseline tenet of American society, namely that more of the same will somehow remedy the problems created in the first place. When a dictatorial president takes us to ill-begotten wars, the solution becomes simply to find a better president -- as if the problem were one of leadership rather than an underlying structural impetus to make war. When those wars go badly, both in fact and perception, we announce a “surge” that will escalate an already-lost conflict in an attempt to somehow “win” it. Better technology is the answer to too much technology. A new pill can cure the ailments produced by the pills we’ve been taking. Weeds and pests become resistant to our biocides, so let’s

make them even stronger -- and the same logic goes for our antibiotics. The economy crashes and consumes vast resources, so we'll prop it up with an infusion of even more resources. And on and on.

Indeed, this is the story of civilization itself, a process that continually requires deeper interventions in order to sustain lifestyles dependent upon initial interventions. It is fundamentally unsustainable, since we cannot keep up with the consequences of our incessant machinations. This is the gambler's paradox, attempting to "double down" over and over again on a bad bet, hoping to someday get level but merely digging a deeper hole each time out. Now, one of those deep holes threatens to prove itself incapable of being made level, exposing the harsh realities of our cavalier logic and raising the prospect of an apocalyptic scenario in which, ironically, we could drown in oil while thirsting for water.

This is a bona fide moment of truth for Americans, and perhaps further for humankind as a whole. We either wake up and smell the methane, or continue sleepwalking down a path to seemingly inevitable self-destruction. Shall we live as servile cogs in obeisance to Moloch as we stoke the perverse machines that maintain the apartheid apparatuses of Petropolis? Or will we choose a new path and refuse to serve our soulless masters, instead demanding that they account for their misdeeds and dismantle the hardware of devastation and despair? It is a clear choice ahead, a societal fork in the road: continue on toward the madness of mutually-assured destruction, or take a real chance on an unknown journey toward self-discovery and collective innovation.

We cannot afford to hit the snooze button and go back to sleep, no matter what the final outcome of the Gulf oil disaster turns out to be. Maybe an ingenious solution will emerge that snatches business-as-usual from the jaws of imminent annihilation. More likely, it will be an inexorable and ambiguous seepage that has innumerable ruinous effects on the habitat, only some of which will legally be traceable back to the oilgarchy, swirling together with various other incipient atrocities to hasten our societal demise like some oblivious frogs in a planet-sized vat of slowly boiling water. Humankind, marinated in oil, literally stewing itself to death in an ultimate act of self-fulfilling consumption....

Will we double down again, or cut our losses and walk away? Sometimes, not playing the game at all is a winning streak unto itself. Either way, the first step is to wake up and answer the opening bell. Destiny is calling, and one way or another we will have to account for our recent whereabouts. That time is now.

Randall Amster, J.D., Ph.D., teaches Peace Studies at Prescott College, and is the Executive Director of the [Peace & Justice Studies Association](#). His most recent book is [Lost In Space: The Criminalization, Globalization, and Urban Ecology of Homelessness](#) (LFB Scholarly 2008).

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Is the "War on Wall Street" Over?

No Criminal Prosecutions for Financial Crimes

by Danny Schechter [article link](#)

July 20, 2010 | Global Research

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Envisioning the Future, Fanning the Flames: 15,000 Attend Detroit Social Forum

High-Energy Gathering Fires Up A New Generation of Activists in U.S. Left and Social Movements

by Carl Davidson [article link](#)

July 19, 2010 | Global Research

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Monday, July 19, 2010

[Chris Hedges: Calling All Future-Eaters](#)

Calling All Future-Eaters

by Chris Hedges [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 19, 2010 | TruthDig | CommonDreams

The human species during its brief time on Earth has exhibited a remarkable capacity to kill itself off. The Cro-Magnons dispatched the gentler Neanderthals. The conquistadors, with the help of smallpox, decimated the native populations in the Americas. Modern industrial warfare in the 20th century took at least 100 million lives, most of them civilians. And now we sit passive and dumb as corporations and the leaders of industrialized nations ensure that climate change will accelerate to levels that could mean the extinction of our species. *Homo sapiens*, as the biologist [Tim Flannery](#) points out, are the "future-eaters."

In the past when civilizations went belly up through greed, mismanagement and the exhaustion of natural resources, human beings migrated somewhere else to pillage anew. But this time the game is over. There is nowhere else to go. The industrialized nations spent the last century seizing half the planet and dominating most of the other half. We giddily exhausted our natural capital, especially fossil fuel, to engage in an orgy of consumption and waste that poisoned the Earth and attacked the ecosystem on which human life depends. It was quite a party if you were a member of the industrialized elite. But it was pretty stupid.

Collapse this time around will be global. We will disintegrate together. And there is no way out. The 10,000-year experiment of settled life is about to come to a crashing halt. And humankind, which thought it was given dominion over the Earth and all living things, will be taught a painful lesson in the necessity of balance, restraint and humility. There is no human monument or city ruin that is more than 5,000 years old. Civilization, [Ronald Wright](#) notes in "A Short History of Progress," "occupies a mere 0.2 percent of the two and a half million years since our first ancestor sharpened a stone." Bye-bye, Paris. Bye-bye, New York. Bye-bye, Tokyo. Welcome to the new experience of human existence, in which rooting around for grubs on islands in northern latitudes is the prerequisite for survival.

We view ourselves as rational creatures. But is it rational to wait like sheep in a pen as oil and natural gas companies, coal companies, chemical industries, plastics manufacturers, the automotive industry, arms manufacturers and the leaders of the industrial world, as they did in Copenhagen, take us to mass extinction? It is too late to prevent profound climate change. But why add fuel to the fire? Why allow our ruling elite, driven by the lust for profits, to accelerate the death spiral? Why continue to obey the laws and dictates of our executioners?

The news is grim. The accelerating disintegration of Arctic Sea ice means that summer ice will probably disappear within the next decade. The open water will absorb more solar radiation, significantly increasing the rate of global warming. The Siberian permafrost will disappear, sending up plumes of methane gas from underground. The Greenland ice sheet and the Himalayan-Tibetan glaciers will melt. [Jay Zwally](#), a NASA climate scientist, declared in December 2007: "The Arctic is often cited as the canary in the coal mine for climate warming. Now, as a sign of climate warming, the canary has died. It is time to start getting out of the coal mines."

But reality is rarely an impediment to human folly. The world's greenhouse gases have continued to grow since Zwally's statement. Global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from burning fossil fuels since 2000 have increased by 3 per cent a year. At that rate annual emissions will double every 25 years. [James Hansen](#), the head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and one of the world's foremost climate experts, has warned that if we keep warming the planet it will be "a recipe for global disaster." The safe level of CO₂ in the atmosphere, Hansen estimates, is no more than 350 parts per million (ppm). The current level of CO₂ is 385 ppm and climbing. This already guarantees terrible consequences even if we act immediately to cut carbon emissions.

The natural carbon cycle for 3 million years has ensured that the atmosphere contained less than 300 ppm of CO₂, which sustained the wide variety of life on the planet. The idea now championed by our corporate elite, at least those in contact with the reality of global warming, is that we will intentionally overshoot 350 ppm and then return to a safer climate through rapid and dramatic emission cuts. This, of course, is a theory designed to absolve the elite from doing anything now. But as [Clive Hamilton](#) in his book "Requiem for a Species: Why We Resist the Truth About Climate Change" writes, even "if carbon dioxide concentrations reach 550 ppm, after which emissions fell to zero, the global temperatures would continue to rise for at least another century."

Copenhagen was perhaps the last chance to save ourselves. Barack Obama and the other leaders of the industrialized nations blew it. Radical climate change is certain. It is only a question now of how bad it will become. The engines of climate change will, climate scientists have warned, soon create a domino effect that could thrust the Earth into a chaotic state for thousands of years before it regains equilibrium. "Whether human beings would still be a force on the planet, or even survive, is a moot point," Hamilton writes. "One thing is certain: there will be far fewer of us."

We have fallen prey to the illusion that we can modify and control our environment, that human ingenuity ensures the inevitability of human progress and that our secular god of science will save us. The "intoxicating belief that we can conquer all has come up against a greater force, the Earth itself," Hamilton writes. "The prospect of runaway climate change challenges our technological hubris, our Enlightenment faith in reason and the whole modernist project. The Earth may soon demonstrate that, ultimately, it cannot be tamed and that the human urge to master nature has only roused a slumbering beast."

We face a terrible political truth. Those who hold power will not act with the urgency required to protect human life and the ecosystem. Decisions about the fate of the planet and human civilization are in the hands of moral and intellectual trolls such as BP's Tony Hayward. These political and corporate masters are driven by a craven desire to accumulate wealth at the expense of human life. They do this in the Gulf of Mexico. They do this in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, where the export-oriented industry is booming. China's transformation into totalitarian capitalism, done so world markets can be flooded with cheap consumer goods, is contributing to a dramatic rise in carbon dioxide emissions, which in China are expected to more than double by 2030, from a little over 5 billion metric tons to just under 12 billion.

This degradation of the planet by corporations is accompanied by a degradation of human beings. In the factories in Guangdong we see the face of our adversaries. The sociologist [Ching Kwan Lee](#) found "satanic mills" in China's industrial southeast that run "at such a nerve-racking pace that worker's physical limits and bodily strength are put to the test on a daily basis." Some employees put in workdays of 14 to 16 hours with no rest day during the month until payday. In these factories it is normal for an employee to work 400 hours or more a month, especially those in garment industry. Most workers, Lee found, endure unpaid wages, illegal deductions and substandard wage rates. They are often physically abused at work and do not receive compensation if they are injured on the job. Every year a dozen or more workers die from overwork in the city of Shenzhen alone. In Lee's words the working conditions "go beyond the Marxist notions of exploitation and alienation." A survey published in 2003 by the official China News Agency, cited in Lee's book "Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt," found that three in four migrant workers had trouble collecting their pay. Each year scores of workers threaten to commit suicide, Lee writes, by jumping off high-rises or setting themselves on fire over unpaid wages. "If getting paid for one's labor is a fundamental feature of capitalist employment relations, strictly speaking many Chinese workers are not yet laborers," Lee writes.

The leaders of these corporations now determine our fate. They are not endowed with human decency or compassion. Yet their lobbyists make the laws. Their public relations firms craft the propaganda and trivia pumped out through systems of mass communication. Their money determines elections. Their greed turns workers into global serfs and our planet into a wasteland.

As climate change advances we will face a choice between obeying the rules put in place by corporations or rebellion. Those who work human beings to death in overcrowded factories in China and turn the Gulf of Mexico into a dead zone are the enemy. They serve systems of death. They cannot be reformed or trusted.

The climate crisis is a political crisis. We will either defy the corporate elite, which will mean civil disobedience, a rejection of traditional politics for a new radicalism and the systematic breaking of laws, or see ourselves consumed. Time is not on our side. The longer we wait, the more assured our destruction becomes. The future, if we remain passive, will be wrested from us by events. Our moral obligation is not to structures of power, but life.

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Chris Hedges writes a regular column for Truthdig.com. Hedges graduated from Harvard Divinity School and was for nearly two decades a foreign correspondent for The New York Times. He is the author of many books, including: [War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning](#), [What Every Person Should Know About War](#), and [American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America](#). His most recent book is [Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle](#).

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The U.S. Needs a New Energy Policy ... Now

Only a dramatic change in course -- governed by an entirely new policy framework -- can reduce the risk of catastrophe and set the nation on a wise energy trajectory.

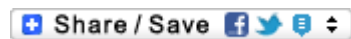
By Michael T. Klare [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 16, 2010 | The Nation | AlterNet

This story is from a new special issue of The Nation on energy. Read more [here](#).

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Sunday, July 18, 2010

Steve Watson: Rockefeller Study Outlines “Doom Decade”

There is little doubt that technology will continue to drive change across the developing world. However, uncertainty exists about the role of technological advances in alleviating poverty. To uncover the range of possibilities that may emerge, novel approaches like scenario planning are essential.

“Scenarios for the Future of Technology and International Development,” a new report, features four very different—yet very plausible—visions of how technology could profoundly alter how we address some of the most pressing challenges in the developing world.

Scenario planning—an innovative method of creating narratives about the future—is a powerful tool for assisting organizations in considering how complex problems could evolve and be solved over the long term. The scenario planning process helps to identify unique opportunities, rehearse important decisions by simulating their broader implications, and illuminate previously unexplored areas of intersection. -The Rockefeller Foundation

Rockefeller Study Outlines “Doom Decade”:

Life For All But Super Wealthy Will Be Hell On Earth

Terror attacks, natural disasters and a surveillance security crackdown

by Steve Watson [article link](#)

July 16th, 2010 | PrisonPlanet

In our leading article today we provide an overview of the nightmare future envisaged by a recent Rockefeller Foundation study which describes a global dictatorship tightly controlled by the world’s elite and super rich.

The Rockefeller blueprint for a new world order entitled “Scenarios for the Future of Technology and International Development,” predicts four future narratives.

One narrative in particular, “Hack Attack” outlines a scenario in which Technology is demonized as a criminal weapon prevalent in a world where civilization has all but collapsed.

“Devastating shocks like September 11, the Southeast Asian tsunami of 2004, and the 2010 Haiti earthquake had certainly primed the world for sudden disasters. But no one was prepared for a world in which large-scale catastrophes would occur with such breathtaking frequency.” the report states.

“The years 2010 to 2020 were dubbed the “doom decade” for good reason: the 2012 Olympic bombing, which killed 13,000, was followed closely by an earthquake in Indonesia killing 40,000, a tsunami that almost wiped out Nicaragua, and the onset of the West China Famine, caused by a once-in-a-millennium drought linked to climate change.” it continues.

The study envisages nation states all over the world literally losing control of their public finances and the ability to retain order and stability with “violence and crime more rampant”. It also envisions global coordination and interconnectedness between nations breaking down altogether to be replaced by proxy wars and low level conflict.

“By 2030, the distinction between “developed” and “developing” nations no longer seemed particularly descriptive or relevant.” the report states.

The only ones able to prosper in such an environment (surprise surprise) are the global elite and the super wealthy:

“The global have/have-not gap grew wider than ever. The very rich still had the financial means to protect themselves; gated communities sprung up from New York to Lagos, providing safe havens surrounded by slums. In 2025, it was de rigueur to build not a house but a high-walled fortress, guarded by armed personnel.” the report states.

As a backdrop to this chaos, the study attacks advanced technology, in particular the internet, depicting it as a tool for criminals and terrorists:

“Technology hackers were also hard at work. Internet scams and pyramid schemes plagued inboxes. Meanwhile, more sophisticated hackers attempted to take down corporations, government systems, and banks via phishing scams and database information heists, and their many successes generated billions of dollars in losses.” the study prophesies.

“The internet is overrun with spam and security threats and becomes strongly associated with illicit activity — especially on “dark webs” where no government can monitor, identify, or restrict activities.” the report states elsewhere.

Of course, the solution to fight such envisioned evils is to implement a highly sophisticated surveillance security system:

“Identity-verification technologies become a staple of daily life, with some hitches — a database of retina recordings stolen by hackers in 2017 is used to create numerous false identities still “at large” in the mid-2020s.”

“The positive effects of the mobile and internet revolutions were tempered by their increasing fragility as scamming and viruses proliferated, preventing these networks from achieving the reliability required to become the backbone of developing economies — or a source of trustworthy information for anybody.” the study outlines.

The message here is clear, the internet revolutionized global communication and enhanced the spread of knowledge, yet it is in its current form uncontrollable, and as such constitutes a great danger to the only ones who can continue to prosper in this nightmare new world order; the global elite.

While communication technology is demonized, other so called advances, such as genetically modified crops are lauded as progressive, despite being mired in controversy in today’s world. The study envisages the by now decimated poorer classes actually benefiting from “backyard and garage activities” including the mass production of GMO foods.

However, the report draws the line on such technological advances when it comes to the production of cheaper medicines and vaccinations, which it intimates will be deadly if allowed to be mass produced outside of elite control.

This study is not a work of dystopian fiction. It has not been written for entertainment value. This is what the Rockefeller Foundation and the elite Global Business Network envisage unfolding in the new world order. This study is deadly serious, and those involved with it's funding and publication are not playing games.

Furthermore, the scenarios outlined in the report are not simply falling into place naturally, they are being actively implemented. Economic collapse and authoritarian social control are being fomented in front of our eyes by design.

The self correcting free market has been strangled and snuffed out by a combination of government intervention and offshore bankster looting of the planet's wealth. As this situation continues to worsen, without meaningful corrective action, it is not difficult to imagine the social unrest we are already witnessing becoming global in its scope.

The report compliments these conditions with propaganda and fearmongering over climate change and natural disasters, as well as huge terror attacks.

It takes the overriding agenda of elite social engineers and places it into a not too distant future as a way of normalizing the prospects it outlines. As the report notes in it's introduction, the scenarios outlined "allow us to imagine, and then to rehearse, different strategies for how to be more prepared for the future — or more ambitiously, how to help shape better futures ourselves."

PrisonPlanet [home page](#)

WHY SCENARIOS?

The goal of this project was not to affirm what is already known and knowable about what is happening right now at the intersections of technology and development. Rather, it was to explore the many ways in which technology and development could co-evolve — could both push and inhibit each other — in the future, and then to begin to examine what those possible alternative paths may imply for the world's poor and vulnerable populations. Such an exercise required project participants to push their thinking far beyond the status quo, into uncharted territory.

Scenario planning is a methodology designed to help guide groups and individuals through exactly this creative process. The process begins by identifying forces of change in the world, then combining those forces in different ways to create a set of diverse stories — or scenarios — about how the future could evolve. Scenarios are designed to stretch our thinking about both the opportunities and obstacles that the future might hold; they explore, through narrative, events and dynamics that might alter, inhibit, or enhance current trends, often in surprising ways. Together, a set of scenarios captures a range of future possibilities, good and bad, expected and surprising — but always plausible. Importantly, scenarios are not predictions. Rather, they are thoughtful hypotheses that allow us to imagine, and then to rehearse, different strategies for how to be more prepared for the future — or more ambitiously, how to help shape better futures ourselves. -Imagining the Future

GBN-Rockefeller Foundation Scenarios on Technology and International Development

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An Open Letter to Terry Allen, Noam Chomsky, Alexander Cockburn, David Corn, Chris Hayes, George Monbiot, Matthew Rothschild, and Matt Taibbi

by David Ray Griffin [article link](#)

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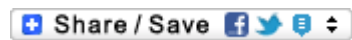
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By Sara Robinson [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 16, 2010 | Campaign for America's Future | AlterNet

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Giordano Bruno: What Would Life Be Like Under Martial Law?

What Would Life Be Like Under Martial Law?

by Giordano Bruno [article link](#)

07.01.10 | Neithercorp Press | Silver Bear Cafe

The U.S. Federal Government under both the Bush and Obama administration has made it perfectly clear that in the event of almost any major disaster scenario, including economic and environmental, they see the institution of Martial Law as not only viable, but inexorable. From legislative actions like the Patriot Act and the Enemy Belligerents Act (currently in committee) to continuity of government programs such as Rex 84 (formerly classified) and Presidential Directive PDD 51 (currently classified, even from Congress), all the "legal" precedents have been put into place to allow the Executive Branch to implement military oversight of civilian affairs, dissolution of Constitutional liberties, even the end of Miranda Rights and the right to a speedy impartial trial as protected under the Sixth Amendment. In some cases, government legislation allows for the rendition and torture of American citizens as combatants, all for the "greater good", of course...

Some in this country dismiss such bills and directives as abstract novelties that don't constitute any real threat to our freedoms or our daily life. People have a tendency to assume that the atmosphere we live in today will remain the same tomorrow and always. Many of us never consider that dramatic, even violent change in American domestic policy is possible on a moments notice. On the contrary, the continuity legislation now in place shows that our government under the direction of corporate globalists is not only prepared to implement a military lockdown of this country, they fully anticipate that such an event will occur in the near future.

In this article, we will examine how Martial Law will be presented to the citizens of the U.S., how it would likely evolve and progress, and what the ultimate end result will be if such action is not stopped by the Liberty Movement and the American public.

A "Reasonable" Tyranny

Tyranny does not always burst through your front door wearing body armor and brandishing an assault rifle. Sometimes, it waltzes through your living room and sweeps you off your feet. Sometimes it wears a glad mask that promises warmth and safety. Sometimes, tyranny invites you out to the party and makes you feel like you belong.

NEVER leave your drink unattended around tyranny...

Regardless of how apathetic the American public may seem at any given moment, the majority of them at their core hate false authority backed by thuggish jackboot mentality when directly faced with it, and will not capitulate to despotism

easily. That's just the way we are. Revolution is in our blood (though now slightly diluted), and it is an undeniable aspect of our national psyche. Widespread and immediate military control of U.S. streets would be met with a fury the world has never seen. If martial law were ever to be achieved by the Federal Government, it would have to be presented to Americans gradually, as absolutely reasonable and necessary to their personal well being not to mention that of their family's. Globalists would have to twist the reality of martial law into a tapestry of fuzzy logic and two dimensional rationalizations, making the action appear almost mathematically evident. They would also need a crisis on a scale nearly beyond belief.

The U.S. is on the verge of many such crises. The economic health of this country is blatantly unstable, and even some mainstream analysts who called us "fear mongers" six months ago are now reluctantly admitting that some form of collapse is probable: [nytimes article](#)

The financial life of America hangs by the thinnest of threads, and any moderate disaster at this stage will most definitely send it spiraling out of control.

Reports of U.S. warships positioning off the coast of Iran are now verified by the Department of Defense, and the media is beginning to spew WMD propaganda once again: [presstv article](#) [reuters article](#)

The likelihood of a U.S. or Israeli attack on the major oil producing nation has increased drastically. It is only a matter of time before Iran gives the West an excuse, or the West fabricates an excuse from thin air. Any new war, anywhere, would spell disaster for the world economy. Period.

And, perhaps the most devastating of all circumstances, BP's act of eco-terrorism in the Gulf of Mexico has turned from a distraction that should have been disentangled immediately, into a slow motion catastrophe whose consequences could be so far reaching they might turn out downright biblical, not to mention, an ample pretext to call for a coastal evacuation and even martial law: [examiner article](#)

These scenarios do not include the ever present threat of government sponsored false flag terrorism, which could exacerbate social tensions one hundred fold. A 9/11 scale attack, perhaps even nuclear in origin, would assuredly be followed by a declaration of martial law.

Under circumstances like these, people tend to allow their fear to dictate what is "reasonable" at the moment. Principles often take a back seat to "moral relativity" in the face of misfortune, even though wisdom demands that principles be held as most important in the worst of times. Freedom and civilian control over government are vital not just when our wallets are stuffed, our stomachs are fed, and the weather is mild, but when the threat of national upheaval hangs in the sky like a sun-baked vulture. When an early and unpleasant demise becomes a distinct possibility for a significant majority of the citizenry, this is when liberty should take precedence over all things.

One argument is always presented by tyrants and their flock during the initial stages social enslavement: "You can't enjoy freedom if you are dead. It is always better to be alive, no matter the cost."

However, what they fail to mention is that it is exceedingly difficult to enjoy being alive when you are a modern feudal peasant whose destiny is subject to the whim of power hungry corporatists and madmen. There is nothing meaningful in that kind of life, just as there is nothing meaningful in the life of a cog in a great machine except to turn around and around. You can't enjoy freedom if you are dead, but you also can't enjoy living if you're not free.

At the beginning of any autocratic system, total authoritarian control is almost always presented as a panacea, a wonder-drug for the masses. When confronted with epic struggle, some people would rather defer responsibility for their survival to someone else rather than make the effort to save themselves, and thus, totalitarianism is born. Martial law in America would be no different. It will be presented to us as purely rational and absolutely necessary; an "extreme solution to extreme times". Its success would rest solely on how many of us are willing to make the effort to determine our own destinies, and how many of us are too cowardly to do so.

Consequences Of Martial Law

Regardless of how well governments sugarcoat the prospect of martial law at its introduction, after it has been instituted, it doesn't take very long for the people to realize they have been duped. The consequences of a militarized society cannot be hidden after the fact, nor does the establishment feel the need to hide those consequences after they have been handed unlimited power.

To peer into the future of what American martial law might look like, one need only research the history of martial law and dictatorships in general. From the Philippines to China to the Soviet Union, the stages of tyranny are pretty much the same no matter where you are in the world. Anyone who believes martial law in America will forgo any of these terrible steps, or that we will somehow maintain a sense of propriety and fairness, is going to be sorely disappointed.

Free Press Destroyed: The very first action of any government that has achieved military control of a country is to dominate the flow of information. The greatest threat to elitist domination is usually the people who they mean to rule over. Ending freedom of the press stalls chances that a view that opposes government control will gain footing. In America, the mainstream media is already under globalist control and would likely remain active during martial law, at least for a time. FOX, CNN, CNBC, etc, would change little, while the true free press (alternative web news which now dominates over the ratings of mainstream media) would be attacked, if not shut down completely. Government enforced web filters (like those in China and being legislated in Australia) could be put in place, and arrests of citizen journalists are liable to occur.

Dissolution Of Checks And Balances: In some cases, military rule allows for the dissolution of states rights and even of Congress itself. If Congress is allowed to remain, it would be in a ceremonial capacity only. Under martial law, all decision making is "streamlined" into the hands of the executive branch. The excuse given for this is often the same everywhere; the President (dictator) must not have his hands tied by checks and balances during a state of crisis, otherwise, his decisions are slowed, and more people could be hurt. Once the executive branch of a country removes checks and balances, they almost never put them back willingly, even after the so-called "crisis" has subsided.

Erasure Of Civil Liberties: Say goodbye to Habeas Corpus immediately. All tyrannies have abruptly suspended rights to fair trial, rights to legal representation, Miranda Rights, even the right to know what one has been charged with before being arrested. This process quickly devolves the justice system to the point where those who are detained simply disappear, and are never heard from again. The U.S. currently has many pieces of legislation that have passed or are pending which allow rendition and even torture of regular citizens, specifically in the event of a national emergency, which under current rules, the President can declare at his leisure.

Curfews, Checkpoints, Searches, Citizen Spies: Say goodbye to privacy. Expect ID checkpoints, and arrests for lack of ID. Expect nighttime curfews in cities enforced with extreme prejudice. Expect warrant-less searches of your home without cause, not to mention surveillance of web and phone traffic. Also count on the fact that some people, out of paranoia, or out of some twisted desire for petty influence, will start pointing an accusing finger at anyone who looks at them the wrong way, and the establishment will encourage this. Tyranny is much easier when the citizens police each other. We actually see some of this behavior today, however, under martial law, there is absolutely no chance whatsoever of holding the authorities or anyone who supports them legally accountable for any wrongdoing. There is essentially no means to voice grievance. Martial law is like a free pass to law enforcement officials to do whatever they please, whenever they please.

Arrests Of Activists And Dissidents: Political opponents of the establishment, no matter how honorable and peaceful they may be, would likely be arrested. Those who have the capability to lead a movement in opposition of the current government or those who have the respect of a sizable percentage of the populace will become priority targets during martial law. All tyrants seek to quash other voices, especially strong voices, so that they can create an environment in which THEIR voice is the only one that can be heard. Activists are normally labeled as subversives, insurgents, or terrorists. They are arrested and treated as enemy combatants. The reigning government will claim that such people are "dangerous" to the stability of the country, and a threat to national security. Associating activists with terrorists also makes the idea of rendition and torture slightly more palatable to the fearful public.

Economic Feudalism: In an autocracy, everything becomes a matter of national security, even the state of the workforce. All jobs become state jobs. The very poor become a possible burden. The middle class and the very rich (if not already part of the establishment) become possible competition. This is why most tyrannies seek to establish "harmonization", which is really just a flowery way of saying that everyone is made equally dependent on the system for their survival. It is hard to become a successful man in an oppressive society if you are not one of the elite. It is even harder to be a pauper in the same society because you are seen as a parasite feeding off the collective (though you are probably hurting no one). Martial law is always followed by an end to economic prosperity for the average citizen and the removal of the traditional middle class. In the end, this causes the public to subjugate themselves. It creates a system which rewards those who submit with a semblance of the status they once had. The alternative: barely eking out an existence while under constant fear that you could be labeled an impediment to social progress. Given this choice, many would choose to conform.

Food, Water, and Healthcare Rationing: Food and water are life. Control these two things in a culture, and you have the makings of a tyranny. One of the most notable aspects in the elitist quest for empire is the trail of hunger and starvation they leave in their wake. All methods are greenlighted. Burning of farmland, hoarding of grain, heavy taxation on livestock or harvests, government micromanagement of planting, everything is fair game. Food regulation can be taken to a whole other level in our modern age. With malicious corporations like Monsanto in operation, genetically modified crops can be created to control diet, "terminator seeds" which yield only one crop can be used to keep the masses from replanting, and the pollen from these plants can be used to infect the genus of non-GMO crops birthing mutant strains which damage the food chain. By creating a food shortage, rationing then becomes inevitable, and with rationing comes greater influence. Healthcare rationing would be a natural extension, until every moment of one's life relies on the good graces of a centralized bureaucracy.

It is rare for a government to implement all of these actions in a single instant. Usually, they are introduced slowly over a period of years, and with each new decree a problem is preemptively engineered by the elites to give a "reasonable" cause, or generate a concrete fear. As time passes, people forget what life was like before, left only with the dreadful circumstances of the present, and a disquieting sensation in the pit of their stomachs, telling them that the world they have been presented is not the world we should have settled for.

Never Compromise Liberty

Tyrants prevail when they are able to fool the masses into compromising their ideals, and their conscience. They enjoy devising scenarios by which we are made to tread through a "grey area", a place where the truth is supposedly a matter of perspective, and that which is right and balanced could become unbalanced and destructive. Once you choose to compromise a fundamental principle, they then use that moment to set precedence.

"If torture is tolerable in the chance that it could save some lives, then perhaps it is tolerable in other situations..." they say. "If some freedoms are expendable in the name of security, then perhaps others are as well."

How do we stop elites from setting precedence in this way? We never compromise.

"Grey Area" scenarios are a charade. A rigged casino game in which there is only a single outcome and a single winner, and the winner is definitely not you. The crisis is usually one that the establishment created in the first place, i.e. the economic collapse, the BP oil spill, false flag terror, etc. And, the solution is always predetermined. No obstacle has only one solution, there are a myriad of answers to every dilemma, some far better than others. Yet, time and time again, we are offered only one way to resolve every disaster; greater centralization and extended government power.

Most disingenuous of all is the constant promise by government to keep us safe. No government has the power to offer security. Security provided by others is an illusion. The only true safety is that which one provides for himself. We accomplish this by becoming self-reliant, self-aware, and tough-minded. We do not wait for some abstract ruling body to come to our aid, and we do not trade our freedom on the false promise that they will honor their agreement.

I have heard it argued that America is different, that we should not suspect our government capable of tyranny because "we are the government". I find this assumption extraordinarily naive. Our government has not represented the wishes of the people for decades. The leaderships of both major parties have supported almost identical legislative measures and extolled parallel globalist ideologies, making a mockery of our election process by giving us only one choice in the casting of our vote. We should be very suspect of such a government, for we are not the same, our goals are entirely opposed, and only one group can be allowed to endure; those who wish to dictate, or those who wish to be free.

I have also heard it said that freedom exists under the purview of government. That the liberties we enjoy are only possible because of the protections that government provides. Elitists often take advantage of our presumption that government is some kind of cultural obligation, one that we must bow to, and that by attrition, we must bow to them. In reality, government is a philosophical construct; a framework that only exists because we will it so, and that administers freedoms only so far as we allow it to do so. WE are the source of our liberty, NOT government. It is we as individuals who ultimately must protect the freedoms we enjoy. Under no circumstance is any government more vital than our personal liberty. The choice is eternally simple; when asked to sacrifice one or the other, government must go.

The Constitution of the United States was drafted as a means to reign in government and force it to respect the freedoms of the people. It exists to deter the power hungry, for under the Constitution they are supposed to be denied the control they thirst for, not given unrestrained supremacy. Martial law is a tool by which the power hungry can remove the restraints of the Constitution and cast aside freedoms on a whim. This is unacceptable no matter the state of affairs. War, terrorism, economic collapse, environmental catastrophe, none of these events gives anyone the license to usurp our liberties. It cannot and will not be allowed. As the 4th of July approaches, we here in America should remember what it means to call ourselves a "sovereign people". It is a title every man is born with but few men have the strength and fortitude to keep. "Independence" requires taxing vigilance, a persevering spirit, and the determination to see that neither is tread upon. Independence has a price. In the event that we are confronted with martial law in this country, it is a price we may have to pay all over again.

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Freedom's Real Enemies

by Chuck Baldwin [article link](#) [article link](#)

Jun 11, 2010 | Chuck Baldwin Live | Silver Bear Cafe

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Sunday, July 18, 2010

Linda McQuaig: Ignoring Nature's Wake-up Call

Ignoring Nature's Wake-up Call

by Linda McQuaig [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 13, 2010 | Toronto Star | CommonDreams

If there is a God, she's surely bewildered by the apparent determination of the human race to ignore the deafening wake-up call she's recently sent our way.

As wake-up calls go, it's hard to beat the BP oil spill. The relentless gush of oil into the Gulf of Mexico for the past 85 days, captured live on camera, should be enough to finally force us to look critically at the deeply flawed concepts that have become the guiding ideologies of our times — starting with unbridled capitalism, and its elevation of economic gain above the very sustainability of the Earth we inhabit.

Another dominant creed that cries out for rethinking is blind faith in technology and the human ability to solve any problem.

For weeks now we've listened to TV commentators explain how enormously tricky it is to cap a tiny opening 1,500 meters below sea level in the dark — almost as hard as finding a needle in a haystack. Good point. But shouldn't that thorny little problem have been worked out before drilling began down there?

Despite an environmental crisis of unknown and unknowable proportions, the ideology that allowed it to happen has proved resistant to change — just as it did in the face of the Wall Street meltdown, another devastating consequence of unbridled capitalism.

Among other things, the BP gusher (and the Wall Street crash) show that the corporate sector has become so powerful in recent decades that even catastrophic consequences — accompanied by public outrage — are no longer sufficient to block its profits-before-all agenda.

The 1979 nuclear accident at Three Mile Island didn't kill anybody, but it shocked the public, and pushed the nuclear industry onto the defensive. For 25 years, the industry laid low, and governments didn't dare approve new nuclear plants.

There's no such humility on the part of Big Oil today; even as the worst-ever maritime environmental disaster unfolded, BP CEO Tony Hayward went yachting. Corporate lobbies now have such clout, with politicians and the media so submissive, that a calamity like the BP oil gusher happens — and nothing really changes.

Here in Canada, while regulations for offshore drilling are being reviewed, it's still pretty much business as usual. Last week, the Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board actually invited bids for new deepwater exploration licenses.

And a Chevron-led consortium has just begun drilling off Newfoundland 2,600 meters below sea level, setting a record for deepest offshore drilling in Canada — fully 1,100 meters deeper and darker than where BP has had such trouble finding a needle in the haystack.

Canadian politicians insist that Canada's waters are suitably regulated. But last December, in response to extensive industry lobbying, the Harper government actually relaxed offshore drilling rules, giving the industry more flexibility in ensuring safeguards against oil spills.

The BP gusher is seen by Ottawa, not as a wake-up call, but as a fresh marketing opportunity for Alberta's oilsands, which are now preposterously being pitched as a "safe" land-based alternative.

Similarly, the nuclear power industry sees a new opening — even though no one has yet figured out how to get rid of radioactive nuclear waste, which may remain dangerous for a million years, according to the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

Not to worry. The waste is being stored in secure containers, and if some of it were to escape . . . well, we'd figure something out.

The Toronto Star [Articles](#) by Linda McQuaig (lmcquaig@sympatico.ca)

The Toronto Star [home page](#)

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:16 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Saturday, July 17, 2010

[William H. Kötke: The Plan: To Save the Life of the Earth and the Human Species](#)

The Plan

By William H. Kötke [article link](#)

Herein: a plan to save the life of the earth and the human species

In discussion one often hears the refrain, "Oh, we can't kill the earth. The earth will survive us," as if that dispels the massive destruction of the planet's life. Well maybe the ants and cockroaches will survive but the morality of we humans destroying the life of the earth back to the cockroaches must be addressed. These types of comments are made by civilized people, members of industrial society who have little relationship to the life of the earth. Because of the life that we are forced to lead due to the structure of industrial society, we do not have familiarity with the larger life that supports us.

Money is our life support system which we use to purchase food and shelter. We are not like our successful forager/hunter ancestors who could identify several hundred plants and explain their uses for food, medicine or handcrafts. The life of the earth provided their life support systems.

Now, our industrial life support systems are threatened even if we have money. When topsoil, oil or potable water run out, they run out and there is no more. Many are becoming aware that our planet is headed toward a massive die-off of human and other species. Some near the first world shopping malls have not yet got a clue but many in third world countries are already seeing the beginnings of "the end of the world."

No need to cite the numbers. We know they are huge. The machinery of industrial civilization is eating up the flesh of the earth. The ocean fish stocks are falling precipitously, deforestation is epidemic, add this to topsoil exhaustion, desertification, pollution of potable water, species extinction and many other indices, then add the newer effects of Global Warming and dwindling oil reserves and anybody should be able to get the picture. An exponentially exploding human population, with increasing material consumption based on dwindling resources and a dying planet will not work!

When people first look at this situation they panic and try to think of ways to save everything. Save everything just as it is. People search for the magic bullet that will solve our problems so that we don't have to think or change lifestyles in any way. Many people believe that "technology will save us," not realizing that technology got us to where we are.

We in the industrial society inherit from Babylon, five thousand years ago. Babylon's energy base was the fertility of grasslands, forests and deep soils. In effect this Babylonian type of culture rewards humans for success in extorting fertility from the flesh of the earth. Today the energy base of industrial farming is the topsoil/fossil fuel trade-off - chemical fertilizer and pesticide applied to exhausted soils; and plants bred especially for this industrial application. Instead of the long term fertility of the soil community of millions of different lives, both macroscopic and microscopic, industry produces chemicals from fossil fuels. This has happened in just an eye-blink of humans' several million year history. Technology and fossil fuel have aided this type of culture in catching more fish, logging more acres, digging more mines, and generally turning anything that could be found into cash. No one asks about the morality of sucking the life out of the planet earth, the biological mother. Holographically, we are lives within lives. We live within the planetary organism and are eating up that which feeds us. We are at the point where the parasite sucks dry the host and the parasite dies.

We're talking about lifestyles that practice large scale agriculture which drains the fertility of the soil and over-graze the landscape. The "bigger barns and broader acres" crowd stretches in a line back to Babylon whose ecology now is essentially gone. This is a culture that does not think deeply about the extinction of intact climax ecosystems. An overgrazed grassland becomes a semi-arid desert; the Cattle Baron's family retires with their loot to the capital city. This is the story of imperialism. We can trace the "surpluses" taken from the earth in the sordid ecological history of the empires since Ancient China, Indus Valley and Babylon.

Viewed as a whole this is a pre-adolescent human culture. The human species has produced many types of culture but the mining of the earth's fertility to swell the social body, to increase the power, production and profit of the elite who are gathered around the emperor - has been a disaster. This grasping after material objects and desperate need to exert power over other humans is an immature response to life. The highest purpose of life in an industrial society is to produce industrial goods.

If We Were Mature Members of a Mature Species

In our maturity we would notice that it is the biological processes of life that provide our sustenance. The loss of only one coral reef and its incubation of numerous fish schools translates its effects to us. The loss of one forest means the deprivation of clean water for us. We cannot destroy that which feeds us. In our maturity we understand that rather than suck biological energy from the earth we must restore the ecologies of the earth to health and live from the increase. A healthy living earth would reflect in a healthy human species.

In our maturity, we would notice that the scramble for industrial products is hardly a sophisticated purpose for the life of the human species. A more mature focus would be to aid the life that we are a part of. If we were a mature species, would we not want a human culture that encouraged the fullest development of each member of society, from en utero to old age; the development of our full human potential? Rather than the "progress" of amassing money, the manifestation would be of more and more human creativity in refining culture and aiding the life process. The proposal is that the highly unusual abilities displayed by rare people are abilities that are latent in the species and that all people can fully develop all of these abilities - full blown - as human culture and creativity become more refined. Because we live in a machine society and our lives are shaped by the needs of the machine process, we fail to recognize that we can shape and create the way we biologically relate to each other and the earth. But, in order to shift from the industrial system we must have some other way to provide food, shelter and to raise children free from emotional damage.

The Biological Multiplier

The life of our earth is made up of biological communities within biological communities. The very important soil community is made up of a huge number of different species. The food of this community is organic debris that falls on it. This is an energy flow system, a food chain, wherein solar energy comes to the tree, dead leaves and other organic debris fall on the ground and are consumed by the soil community. The excrement of the soil community rests in solution and is taken up by the roots of the tree. The tree stands above ground in its own guild of plant species, a forest or as a mainstay in a surrounding community of smaller plants. (Actually, below ground also where species of mushroom mycelium spread vast mats of fibers which connect with plant roots symbiotically). Everything is food and everything is excrement in the

cyclic flow system. There is no waste. This is the process of creating soil that plants can live on. It requires three hundred to one thousand years to create each new inch of topsoil in optimum ecosystems.

If the biology is injured, say a fire, earthquake or storm, the health is restored in biological succession. First, tough plants (now usually called weeds) come in to cover the exposed and oxidizing soil. Then as those plants lay down their bodies more topsoil and altered soil chemistry prepares for the next succession of plants, which prepare for the next, ultimately reaching back to the original health of the climax ecosystem which might be an “old growth” forest or primary grasslands. As the succession proceeds, the diversity, the number of species, increases until climax which has the largest number of species and therefore the greatest photo synthetic income. The climax ecosystem is the normal state of health of the earth - all over and everywhere on the earth! Presently, as the earth’s vegetative cover is stripped the solar food of the living earth is choked off - with the obvious consequences.

The Human Possibility

Because humans have the mobility and intelligence, they can restore the ecosystems and increase the diversity of many areas over what would be climax. Humans can potentiate ecosystems and live in stability from the increase. Realizing that now, anything except existing wild lands would be scar tissue renewing the flesh of the earth. The preferred method of restoration would be the practice of Permaculture. This method of growing food and restoring ecosystems has spread world-wide among cognizant people .

The thrust of technology is to simplify living systems. One can average a stated number of pounds of red meat by cattle grazing a rangeland ecosystem. Cattle eat mainly grass but if one looks at the multiplicity of species that eat plants it is seen that far higher production of red meat could be gained per acre by harvesting the rabbits, pronghorns, deer, elk and other species because each species eats different plants such as grass, forbs, bushes and such, giving a seamless and non-destructive cropping of the ecosystem. It is because of the manageability of the cow that the industrial system ignores and eliminates the other species that would actually be more productive. This is done for “efficiency” resulting in surpluses (profits). Industrial mass production monocropping has produced a simplified diet. In the supermarket we see a wide diversity of packaging but the basic food is wheat, corn, potato and rice. With Permaculture we greatly increase the diversity of our foods which will assist our health, our abundance and our community food security. In a decentralized system with local control, we can grow much more food for people than can the industrial system grow food for “surpluses.”

This is the watershed of the logic. For the humans and planet to endure, a completely new human culture must be created. This is not movies and books. This is the whole world view and all of the content by which we relate to each other and to the earth in belief, practice and ritual. This will be a most amazing adventure. If one has heart and courage and can move out of virtual reality onto the fact of the living planet, our future will provide one of the most exciting challenges we humans have faced, with the greatest benefits, if we are successful. Previously, culture proceeded by the conditioning of each new generation. Now we find that there is little human culture remaining aside from what we are required to do to keep the machine process moving. In history humans have not been in a situation where we artfully create our own culture. We must reverse the social values of “civilization.” Alienation, isolation and individualism become clan and tribe, focus turns to each individual rather than the idealizing of leaders and power, life and its celebration become primary rather than amassing material objects. When we become a mature, legitimate and potentiative part of the earth’s biology, then we have the base to explore and develop our human potential, rather than focusing our lives on the production and acquisition of material objects.

The great power of humans is not petroleum, it is creativity and adaptation. We can create the future world. Humans need food, shelter and love. With Permaculture we can restore ecosystems, build soil and produce more food per acre than the industrial system. These projects exist now. One can go look at them. Shelter exists. Examples of “alternative” houses can be viewed that heat and cool themselves without outside energy inputs. Intentional communities exist which focus on positive vibrations of cooperation, mutuality and love. How much more do we need to know?

We would not be trying to save the world as we know it, we would be looking at the future world and working toward it. There will be a massive apocalypse. “Civilization” has overshot its life support systems so far that it is irretrievable.

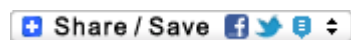
Traditional agriculture drains the fertility of the soil unless large amounts of organic material are fed to the soil community to replace it. In our culture we have a tradition of “farmed out” lands. The industrial system has boosted food production by injecting artificial fertilizers into exhausted soils. Now, more than half the world’s population eats because of the added production caused by fossil fuel derived fertilizers. Now, we reach the peak of fossil fuel production while the population continues to explode. This is only one of the factors of the general overshoot phenomenon.

The Plan is to establish self-sufficient, population-stable, seed communities, wherever possible with the expectation that some or most of them would survive the apocalypse. These then become the seed of the future human species. Most species devote much energy to raise and prepare a future for their young. For our species to endure, we civilized humans must come up to that level of maturity.

Though our image is future oriented, the benefits of this kind of life can be enjoyed now. This is a grand project of a species attempting to change itself. We could not ask for more challenge to our creativity. We have resources. We now have planetary communication through various mediums. We have thousands of people in thousands of eco-villages around the planet. This disaster is waking people up. The world population is beginning to understand global warming and its origins; all over the world people are going green. The species is beginning to reorient itself. This is not the shopping mall. We are not going to be handed a simple solution off the shelf. But, we can point the direction toward aiding the living things. We can reject the death culture and create a culture of life.

William H. Kötke, author of *Garden Planet: The Present Phase Change of the Human Species*, available at www.gardenplanetbook.com, Amazon, Barnes and Noble and retail bookstores. He is also the author of the newly reprinted underground classic, *The Final Empire: The Collapse of Civilization and the Seed of the Future*, which may be seen at www.thefinalempirebook.com.

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William H. Kötke: The Revolution That Is Arising From THE EARTH

The Revolution That Is Arising From THE EARTH

by William H. Kötke [article link](#)

The planetary elite are compelled to continue on their path of growth leading toward planetary domination. The international bankers through their control of the industrial world’s privately owned central banks maintain a tether on the money system through their control of the U.S. dollar as the currency of international trade. One important mechanism that allows this is that the largest item in international trade - oil - is sold in dollars. In order to insure the continuance of the dollar economy, they must be able to choose which currency oil is sold for or control the oil - or both. The center of the empire, the U.S., is maintained by debt as the petrodollars and other dollars come into the U.S. at the rate of at least two and a half billion per day (purchasing U.S. government bonds) in order to continue the cycle, which keeps the empire and its military power expanding. As the elite carry out their strategies of domination they are racing against time. The monster trends of Peak Oil and energy exhaustion, climate change which will severely disrupt the seasons of growth in the food supply system, the weakness of the dollar and ecological collapse are pursuing them. An exponentially growing world population with growing material consumption based on dwindling resources and a dying planet won’t work, but they have no other option to maintain their power and profit.

Seeds of Change

As the industrial system spins toward exhaustion, seeds of change are sprouting at the base. The people at the base are not revolting in order to take the power that the elite have but are revolting to take power over their own lives. In Argentina, after the Neoliberal apparatchniks collapsed the economy and devastated the middle class leaving massive unemployment, the workers began to take over the factories and run them themselves, with all employees receiving the same wage. The

great documentary, *The Take*, details the story of one factory take-over by the employees against a background of over two hundred factory take-overs. Earlier, the people at the base had begun to move when the courageous “The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo” began to organize and demonstrate. These were women who had family members disappeared and were demonstrating in the face of a vicious fascist military dictatorship which is estimated to have murdered at least thirty thousand people. The courage of the mothers was an important factor in bringing down the fascists and spreading courage and inspiration to the working people.

The economy had crashed under the military dictatorship and then after electoral politics was reorganized, the economy revived to some extent and then it crashed again under the auspices of the Neolibs in the IMF and World Bank. President Carlos Menem who had acquiesced to them was tagged as the culprit.

In the final scenes of the documentary, *The Take*, Menem had gone down in disgrace and a new election was being prepared. Suddenly, the new factory worker/owners saw that the political class had gone down to central casting and thrown up a slate of the same tired old political characters. Even Menem ran again, though Nestor Kirchner won.

When the film makers questioned the worker/owners about this they symbolically shrugged their shoulders. The machinations of electoral politics preformed by the political/financial class had become only marginally relevant to them. They had taken power in their neighborhoods, on the factory floor and in the head office.

The Mondragon Cooperatives

The Basque people exist in Northern Spain, centered in the Pyrenees mountains. Their culture and population exist partly in France and partly in Spain. They are an ancient people and one of only several peoples of Europe who have a language that is not Indo-European, the grain eating patriarch herders who invaded Europe from Central Asia thousands of years ago. The Basque culture, centered in the mountains, is land - based in small, fertile, productive farms and hamlets. Though cities and towns have grown up in some areas, the cultural roots exist in a system in which each small farm was inherited within the family and the surname of each member of the family was the same as the ancient name of the farm. This and the manner of farming and interaction were inherited from the ancient past.

In addition to the land - based culture, the Basque in the Twentieth Century had become significant industrialists with their iron mines, industries and international trade. This was mixed with the chaos of the Spanish Civil War and the establishment of Francisco Franco as the head of the Spanish fascist state. The economic environment was not welcoming to innovation during the Franco regime as the fascist state was lead by financiers and politicians who had a foot in both realms much like in the present United States.

Nonetheless the Mondragon cooperative movement grew out of this soil. As described in the classic study, *We Build The Road As We Travel*, by Roy Morrison, eleven young people purchased a small bankrupt factory that produced paraffin cooking stoves. The year was 1954. Since that time the Mondragon cooperative movement has grown to tens of thousands of workers and dozens of enterprises networked together and anchored by their own bank the Caja Lboral Popular, owned by the enterprises.

Growing out of this context, the individuals are not simply farm cooperative workers, industrial workers or even bank workers but the movement has a wider and deeper reach. One of the guiding principles of the movement is *equilibrio*. Morrison says,

“The Mondragon cooperative system is informed by an essentially ecological consciousness. Ecology, conventionally defined as the relationship of living things to their environment, is understood here to encompass social as well as biological reality and their interaction. Today, Mondragon’s ecological consciousness is manifested not primarily through environmentalism, but through the practice of a social ecology: the pursuit of equilibrio is fundamentally connected to the basic ecological principle of diversity and unity, or, in social terms, freedom and community. Its promise is basic change that will harmonize both social life and the relationship between the social and natural worlds.”

Writer Steven Curtis Jackobs says,

“Basque leadership styles are unauthoritarian, involve consensual processes, and are aimed at harmonizing the group’s feeling for collective ends with possible suspicion and lack of trust. A neighborhood’s elected representative does not simply wield power, but builds consensus for group projects. This process often encounters problems of suspicion arising from individual and class differences. These are reflected in the relative difficulty of establishing agricultural cooperatives and point to the nonutopian nature of the Basque situation.”

Ten percent of the cash flow of the network is invested in the communities and in charitable institutions, while another principle is to maintain as little spread between the bottom wage and the top as possible. In this amazing movement from the base, coming out from under a fascist political/financial class as it did, the Mondragon cooperatives show a way to build resilient community social institutions. This social health will be valuable as we head into the future of the exhaustion of industrial society and its fragmentation.

These areas are only a portion of the movement of people at the base who are acting to protect and enhance their communities even under the trampling impact of raw industrial capitalism. India especially, has a number of home - grown movements attempting to protect and strengthen their local social fabric. One would be remiss not to mention the cooperatives of the state of Kerala in India and of the many grassroots movements that the amazing eco/feminist Vandana Shiva has been associated with and has publicized.

Beyond Oil

In 2003, Richard Heinberg published his seminal book, *The Party’s Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies*. His study concerns the observation that the production of crude oil will peak and then begin to decline to its end. At this point most of the oil producing countries of the world have declining production. Heinberg, who is a faculty member at New College of California, Santa Rosa campus, projects that we are now at the peak of world production of crude oil. This, as he suggests, will have immeasurable impact on the exponentially exploding world population living on oil. He also suggests that this will collapse the capitalist economies which must have growth in order to survive.

Following the publication of his book, he and others who were also following these trends have swung into action to notify the world’s populations of the impending apocalypse. Many are now involved. The flagship organization of this effort is the [Post Carbon Institute](#), led by Julian Darley. Under the umbrella of this organization a [Relocalization Network](#) has been organized. The effort of these local groups is to examine and take action concerning the local community life support systems with the obvious view that soon the outside energy supports will decrease or stop.

With amazing speed this network has mushroomed. There are now one hundred and thirty eight community groups in twelve countries. The [relocalization group](#) in Willits, California, is one of the cutting edge points. Their project teams are assessing and taking action on all points of the community’s survival support areas. Their teams are focused on eight areas; business, culture/education, energy, food, health, shelter, transportation and water.

Each of their project team’s focus is quite comprehensive. For example the Business project team’s focus is,

"...a Sustainable Mix of Businesses in our area, Business Financing, Small Business Incubation, Finding productive uses of Waste Streams from Business (preferably as raw material for another businesses), Employment, Vocational Training, Local Market Structures, Local Currency, and Bartering Systems."

Their Food project team at this point has three areas that they work on, the [Mainstreet Community Garden, the Gleaners and Brookside Farm](#). This year the Gleaners have collected tons of food from the local area and donated it to local charities and food banks. Their Brookside farm is in full production and a salient point there is the installation of a micro-hydro system.

We all know the numbers of the percentage of the population in the old days who were agrarian and produced food and the small percentage now who produce the food for industrial citizens. We are members of the industrial society. We purchase

our survival systems with money. We do not go out to the back forty and cut some wood for our wood cookstove and heater. We are a population whose survival systems are huge organizations that stretch to ethereal heights which we cannot see and only vaguely understand and over which we have little control. But the base is moving to protect itself and the relocalization effort offers great encouragement.

The Earth Speaks

We who can read these words are civilized people who have been mentally conditioned by the culture of civilization and the industrial society from birth. We have precepts loaded into our subconscious minds which cause us to see reality in a certain way. To a native Maya person in the State of Chiapas, Mexico, the earth speaks through them. They live integrated with the earth in their everyday energy systems and in their mental attitudes. To them the fact that the earthlife has manifested these living things around us, and us, means that we are children of the Mother Earth and we speak as one of the voices of the earth. To the Maya this is obvious on a deep level. To us it is an interesting intellectual proposition only, because we have been conditioned by a cultural upbringing that filters out this deep understanding and we do not mentally link our life with the life of the living earth.

To the Maya security is the earth and its care. The Maya live with the earth and feed from its natural bounty. Historically for a million years our species has been very successful. We have been adapted to the earth life. We lived within the ecological web and energy flows of the earth. Our traditional migratory patterns carried us over our gathering areas. In the season when the game were fat in one place we went there, when the berries were ripe in another we went there. Our success was adaptation to the life of the earth. We also had a culture that respected the earth and living things. The proposition is simple. We are alive, we live because of the other living things which feed us, we are obligated to respect and encourage those other living things so that we too can live.

Though this simple logic escapes civilization, it is obvious that we must begin to fashion a culture that has these values at the center, if our species is to survive. Our culture teaches us that wealth is the central value of human life and that wealth is our security. When we left our forager/hunter life and began agriculture, civilization and empire, we began a way of life that was not integrated with the life around us but ran a net ecological deficit of the earth's fertility. The earth's flesh; the topsoils, the forests, the fish stocks and the other species began to decline and recede. Thousands of years ago the effects of this culture were displayed in the early empires of Sumeria and Babylon in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. With irrigated agriculture they managed to exhaust and salinize the soils to the extent that today one third of the possible arable land in Iraq still cannot be used because of salinization caused by the early empires. With agriculture, overgrazing and deforestation, they so destroyed the land that the river borne erosion material has filled in the gulf for one hundred and eighty five miles!

Now the mouth of the river enters the ocean that far from where it did before the culture of civilization began.

The culture of the Maya of Chiapas is not like that of civilization. They are survival remnants of a culture impacted by imperial colonization. In order to protect themselves, their culture and their living world, they have risen up in resistance. In many parts of the Southern Hemisphere the indigenous at the base are arising but the EZLN, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, were the lead. The Zapatistas are anti-capitalist but no propagandist could get away with calling a Native American an industrial communist. They are more properly termed anti-civilization, Against civilization in its present form.

Chiapas is one of the richest states in Mexico in terms of industrial resources and has the poorest people. The Maya know well the effects of "civilization" - empire, war, colonization and exploitation by the elites. Against this backdrop they have begun to change some of the forms of governance of their own communities such as the role of women and the position of the elders. Women are now occupying positions of authority and the elders authority is being relegated to the sphere of traditions and culture rather than clan power in all the aspects of life.

They are creating [a new kind of culture](#) out from under the burden of colonialism. They have a culture of sharing, cooperation and care of the earth. This is being made the cultural basis of governance. They scorn the political class along with the electoral politics which is their control mechanism. The Zapatistas control from the base through community

meetings. There is a culture of human community rather than social isolates in mass industrial society who vote periodically for a list of names. They have power over the way of life of their community rather than voting on someone in a far-off parliament.

In their areas they have created parallel governments quite unlike the colonial government they are shouldering aside. One of the strong moves has been to take back the power to educate their youth. In mass industrial society the education of the youth is conducted by educational institutions governed by the elites who make sure that this is tailored to the needs of those elites and the industrial society that they control. By having control of the minds of the youth they are able to inculcate the reality view of industrial society with all its purposes, values and meanings. Nearly all of the artifacts of industrial culture are purchased from industry. The transportation, housing, food, water, and then the cultural world view provided electronically provides a near seamless reality that has little to do with life and living things but with power, profit and violence. The violence of three killings per hour on television is reflected in the violence to the earth and the violence of imperial wars of conquest to feed the maw of the machine that runs a net deficit of the earth's fertility in order to insure its survival.

To the Zapatistas, transferring to the young the tremendously valuable fund of information that the species has amassed is certainly possible without also placing it in the context of the values of industrial civilization. They even have plans for a Zapatista university. But the manner of teaching is different. In their view the teacher comes to class to learn just like the students. It is a combined inquiry and the contribution of each participant is valuable. An important ingredient in their culture is respect; respect for the elders, respect for the earth and respect for each other. Life is valuable. They do not perpetuate a hierarchical command system.

Eco Villages and the New Aborigines

The immediate world problem is the net deficit of the earth's fertility. This is solved by self-sufficient communities. The eco villages which are being formed around the world are pointed toward self-sufficiency. Eco villages grew, in part, out of the intentional community movement that began to swell in the late nineteen sixties. As the global recognition of the plight of the earth's life grew, so did the eco village movement.

The "live in balance with nature" phrase does not necessarily mean adopting a loin cloth and eating roots and berries. The fact is that there are far too few roots and berries left. We can, although, create ways of living that are self-sufficient and that do pay obeisance to the successful million year history of our species.

Of course there are many "eco villages" in various cultures around the world that are still near self-sufficiency but the new eco village movement within the machine of industrial society is significant. We in industrial civilization are culturally conditioned to associate power with wealth. In reality, from top to bottom, our daily lives are governed by huge mass institutions over which we have little or no control. All our survival systems are controlled by mass institutions. We have little fundamental control of our lives. Our picture of "freedom" is to have enough money to do "whatever we want". But this is not real power on the planet earth. Being able to create one's habitation, feed oneself through one's own efforts and live in a real human community that serves the developmental needs of each individual and the community is real power.

The eco village movement is a follow-on to the resources developed by the "alternative community" activists. These resources are many. They involve alternative medicine as an alternative to industrial medicine. Herbalism, aromatherapy, chiropractic, body work, which is often called energy medicine, acupuncture, nutrition and many others are resources that are popular. Gender equality is a very strong theme. Grassroots, consensus government is seen as real democracy. In the realm of habitation local materials such as straw bale, cob, adobe and other alternatives to industrial construction are emphasized. This is usually combined with passive or active solar advantages in addition to water harvesting systems. Various alternative energy systems have been perfected.

The pleasure of providing one's food has gone beyond the European row crop system to the far more sophisticated [Permaculture](#). The practice of permaculture has spread world-wide. In some aspects Permaculture is a way of designing (or planting) one's area and watershed with a high diversity of human and ecologically useful species that all fit together into plant communities. It is based in perennial plants, does not turn the soil on the broadscale and through its diversity provides

a healthy, balanced diet. Permaculture can restore soil fertility while providing more food per acre than can industrial agriculture. This comparison is somewhat unfair to the industrial system which grows monocrops on vast areas with the purpose of sucking up soil fertility by the use of annual plants for profit. Its purpose is not to feed people, but to force surpluses from the earth for profit. Permaculture on the other hand does not produce massive surpluses of monocrops, its purpose is to feed people. It can although, produce specialty crops for the local farmers markets or village barter centers.

People leaving the disintegrating human culture of industrial society have experimented with many social forms. Celibacy, monogamy and group marriage are possibilities. Ritual and the creation of traditions are important. The content of our daily lives are important. How we relate to each other and how we relate to the youth are important. In community there are mentors for the youth, uncles, aunts, elders. In the impoverished human culture of industrial society the young are deposited in front of a television and then when they are a little older they are stuffed into a mass educational institution preparing them to become another industrial cipher.

In traditional cultures of our species, the youth were taught how to be human. This is artfully shown in the book, *Seven Arrows*, by Hyemeyohsts Storm from the Cheyenne culture of the North American Great Plains. An African couple, both who came from a small, traditional village in Ghana have been valuable resources for the intentional community movement. [Sobonfu E. Some](#) and her husband [Malidoma Patrice Some](#) help us understand what life-centered, human village life is like.

People are returning to the land and community in many forms. The direction is set and there are many paths. One unique path is a method using traditional capitalist techniques to reach that goal. Globalecovillage www.globalecovillage.com led by Biosphere II architect Phil Hawes has created a stock company listed on Wall Street to reach that goal of designed eco villages.

The elephant in the room is the [Global Ecovillage Network](#) that involves tens of thousands of villages. This is a world-wide network of eco villages that shows that rather than having to adopt a loin cloth, the ancient human values of our species can be established at the next higher turn of the spiral with eco villages all over the world connected and communicating over the internet like a global mind. A small solar panel or a micro hydro, a telephone connected to a satellite and there you have it. The eco village is not a retreat backwards into some kind of insignificance.

The burgeoning movement is shown by a statement from the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). "Network members include large networks like Sarvodaya (11,000 sustainable villages in Sri Lanka); EcoYoff and Colufifa (350 villages in Senegal); the Ladakh project on the Tibetan plateau; ecotowns like Auroville in South India, the Federation of Damanhur in Italy and Nimbin in Australia; small rural ecovillages like Gaia Asociación in Argentina and Huehuecoyotl, Mexico; urban rejuvenation projects like Los Angeles EcoVillage and Christiania in Copenhagen; permaculture design sites such as Crystal Waters, Australia, Cochabamba, Bolivia and Barus, Brazil; and educational centres such as Findhorn in Scotland, Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales, Earthlands in Massachusetts, and many more." In the U.S. there are presently eighty-three villages affiliated with the network. One can imagine the creative ideas that flow between all of these villages!

GEN is divided into three areas: [GEN - Europe and Africa](#), [GEN - Oceania and Asia](#), and the [Eco Village Network of the Americas](#).

The worm has turned. In former decades revolutionaries vied to grab the industrial power of the elites in order to redistribute wealth. Now we have seen what the "wealth" of the industrialist/banker has done to the earth and our future. Now we in the culturally poor but "wealthy" societies are looking to the "richness" of a new kind of human culture that cannot be directed but can only grow out of the base.

The base is in motion. The earth is speaking. Those involved with infinite demands upon finite resources will not survive but the earth will survive along with those children embedded within her.

William H. Kötke, author of *Garden Planet: The Present Phase Change of the Human Species*, available at www.gardenplanetbook.com, Amazon, Barnes and Noble and retail bookstores. He is also the author of the newly reprinted underground classic, *The Final Empire: The Collapse of Civilization and the Seed of the Future*, which may be seen at www.thefinalempirebook.com.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:35 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Stephanie McMillan: Our Planet, Our People are not Expendable!

Our Planet, Our People are not Expendable! We Refuse To Sacrifice Life for Corporate Profits

by Stephanie McMillan [article link](#)

July 17 2010 | CommonDreams

The Gulf of Mexico has been destroyed. Immeasurable, irreparable damage has been done to wildlife, the health of the ocean, and people's livelihoods. We have been cursed for years to come. It can not, as BP promises, be "made right." In fact, even after this utter catastrophe, crimes against the planet and its inhabitants continue without pause.

We are told that the government is supposed to guarantee the rights of the people. But when a big corporation decides our rights are not in their interests, then POOF! They vanish into thin air. In a clear violation of our rights to free speech and a free press, government agencies have assisted BP's lies and cover-up by restricting media access, threatening journalists with felony charges and \$40,000 fines. Uniformed police officers in Louisiana have harassed photographers at public beaches. BP has threatened workers with firing if they talk to anyone about anything.

We are also told that the government's purpose is to protect the country and us. But instead the government helps big corporations plunder the country and trash our lives. The Minerals Management Service allowed BP to cut corners and violate safety regulations, leading finally to the fatal decision to save a few hundred thousand dollars by not installing a backup valve.

When BP ignored an order by the Environmental Protection Agency to stop using the dispersant Corexit 9500 (a poisonous compound banned in Europe), the EPA did absolutely nothing. Millions of gallons are still being dumped into the Gulf, even as it has been shown to evaporate and fall as toxic rain, and is damaging plants far inland.

BP and its employees have given more than \$3.5 million to federal candidates during the past 20 years, with the biggest portion going to Obama. It also spent \$15.9 million on lobbying last year alone, for the purpose of controlling energy policy.

What does all this tell us?

The government repeatedly sells us out to corporate interests. It sells out our rights, our health, our safety, our livelihoods, our lives, and the natural world. The government is merely a tool to facilitate the conversion of life into profit.

The BP spill is not an accident. It is an inevitable consequence of a global economic system that values profit over life. The BP spill is not unique. Oil companies have ruined large areas of the Niger Delta, Ecuador and other parts of the world, and they will continue to do so until they are stopped.

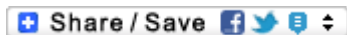
The ruthless pursuit of profit has caused 98% of old growth forests to be cut down. 99% of the prairies are gone. 80% of rivers worldwide no longer support life. 94% of the large fish in the oceans are gone. 120 species per day becomes extinct. Now the Gulf of Mexico has been ruined. Clearly, a global economic system based on perpetual growth is unsustainable. Yet those who run this system do not stop, will not stop.

At what point will we stop accepting this?

We can not stand by while big corporations like BP, with the assistance of the US government, destroy our lives and our planet. We should have stopped them a long time ago. Now we must stop them before they do even more damage, before they kill everything. We depend upon the natural world -- we must now urgently come to its defense.

Stephanie McMillan is a cartoonist who draws the daily comic strip "Minimum Security" and the weekly editorial cartoon "Code Green." Her website is stephaniemcmillan.org. Contact her at steph@minimumsecurity.net.

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Friday, July 16, 2010

[Paul Joseph Watson: Facebook Deletes Official Alex Jones Page Over Gadsden Flag](#)

Facebook Deletes Official Alex Jones Page Over Gadsden Flag

by Paul Joseph Watson [article link](#)

July 16 2010 | Prison Planet

Facebook has sensationally banned the official Alex Jones Facebook page after a customer services representative admitted that all material containing images of the famous Gadsden flag was being deleted by the social networking giant.

While some fan pages remain up, the official [Alex Jones Facebook Page](#) has been terminated. Other Alex Jones pages run by Infowars readers have also been deleted, such as the [The-Real-Alex-Jones Page](#).

If Facebook has embarked on a policy of banning political expression and images it deems offensive then the company should be more open about the fact. While Facebook [didn't consider it necessary to delete a fan page dedicated to the British murderer Raoul Moat](#), it is now purging all material related to the Tea Party movement, states' rights and the Gadsden flag, which is a symbol of resistance against tyranny and was originally used by the United States Marine Corps.

It's unsurprising that Facebook has nailed its political colors to the mast in serving the establishment by targeting grass roots Facebook pages that display the Gadsden flag. Facebook founder [Mark Zuckerberg has denounced privacy](#) as a 'social norm' of the past, an apt excuse given the fact that his website is little more than a vast intelligence database used by spy agencies to dig up information on people. Even more alarmingly, [IM's from Zuckerberg's early Facebook days](#) reveal his total disregard for privacy. In the IM's, Zuckerberg insults Facebook users as "dumb fucks" for trusting him with their private information.

The move to ban Tea Party-related material is just one example of the wider move to censor the Internet as part of the cybersecurity agenda.

[During an appearance on CNN last month](#), Senator Joe Lieberman, the sponsor of a bill that would [give President Obama the power to shut down parts of the Internet](#), admitted that cybersecurity was all about seizing the same policing power over the world wide web employed by the Communist Chinese government.

[As we have documented](#), Chinese censorship of the Internet has nothing to do with security and is almost exclusively focused around covering up government atrocities and abuse by silencing whistle blowers and blocking the free flow of information. The system that Lieberman wants America to adopt is all about political oppression and preventing people from becoming organized and active in standing up against big government.

We are continuing to investigate Facebook's move to ban the official Alex Jones page and we encourage everyone to contact Facebook and let them know that you will boycott their services if the page is not re-instated.

Contact Facebook at info@facebook.com or disabled@facebook.com.

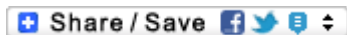
A Flag of Conviction [web page](#)

Gadsden Flag History [web page](#)

Gadsden Flag [wikipedia](#)

PrisonPlanet [home page](#) Alex Jones

InfoWars [home page](#) Alex Jones



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[Carolyn Baker: Revolution: The Wrong Kind and the Right Kind](#)

Revolution: The Wrong Kind and the Right Kind

By Carolyn Baker [article link](#)

July 16 2010 | OpEdNews

Lately I've been encountering articles and news stories touting the need for revolution in the wake of a gansterized U.S. financial system and a government that has itself become a criminal enterprise. I sense that many bloggers and their readers are salivating with anticipation that someone or something will light the fuse of a revolutionary cannon that will eviscerate the present system and replace it with something more just and humane.

I share their enthusiasm for profound, bone-marrow transformation of the status quo. Jefferson really was right when he proclaimed that the United States needed a revolution every twenty years. Many of us who were activists during the Vietnam War era were determined to pull off a revolution that would destroy the military industrial complex, institutionalized racism, and the entire capitalist agenda.

Today's visionaries and activists cherish similar hopes, yet I fear that they do not yet grasp the kind of revolution that the planet seems to be asking for. And unlike the revolution we envisioned four decades ago, this one must be in response to the planet and the earth community. From this perspective, I believe there are two kinds of revolution in front of us: The kind that is inappropriate and the kind that is both useful and critical for planetary survival.

Inappropriate Revolutions

The most truly inappropriate revolution would be one based on false assumptions, principally, the notion that political change on a grand scale is meaningful. Pundits of this kind of revolution include all cheerleaders for the Democratic Party and all others who champion the Progressive, left-liberal landscape. These folks are currently obsessing about the November election and agonizing over Tea Party cacophonies. From this perspective, if the far-right were resoundingly defeated by the election of liberal candidates, the nation might be spared from spiraling downward into fascism.

Other well-meaning but naïve proponents of revolution argue that social upheaval and more people in the streets will signal enough distress among the population to provide fertile ground for a political and cultural revolution. While not directly advocating the overthrow of the federal government, these individuals are poised to organize and assume positions of leadership should sufficient unrest unfold.

Inappropriate revolutions tend to focus on widespread global (whether literal or symbolic) measures that will result in mass consciousness raising, mass movements, and mass political and cultural change. This philosophy mirrors "bigger is better" and assumes that significant change only happens when society at large is involved. Models of this kind of revolution in the modern era would be ones such as the Russian Revolution, the Maoist revolution in China, and the Cuban Revolution.

Such revolutions rarely address the emotional and spiritual aspects of social change because for the most part, the possibility that any force greater than the human mind and ego exists is rejected out of hand. A revolution operating from this assumption is by definition, human-centric. Whereas political revolutions may include individuals who care deeply about the ecosystems and argue passionately for stewardship of the earth, their agenda is not fundamentally informed by the earth. Man is still the measure of all things and therefore, given the desired political context, humans can reverse their species' destruction of the planet and engineer something approximating utopia.

So what is an appropriate revolution? And appropriate to what, you may ask.

Appropriate Revolutions

An appropriate revolution is one that is relevant to what is actually needed in the light of human and planetary evolution. It is not primarily political but rather informed by what the earth community is asking for. For example, the earth is not asking for more efficient and accessible healthcare. Rather, it is asking that humans live in such conscious intimacy with the earth that nearly all of humanity's diseases and injuries are prevented as a result of that relationship.

Likewise, the earth is not asking for renewable energy but a cellular level transformation of consciousness regarding how we live on the earth-how we eat, what we wear, the products we use, where we live, where we travel and how.

The earth is not asking for jobs, but rather a painfully honest examination of our purpose in walking on her body in terms of the work that is most beneficial for her and all species that inhabit the planet.

The earth is asking, no pleading, for inhabitants who are willing and eager to live and relate locally in small communities, cooperating with neighbors to replenish what has been stolen from the earth and to enhance the well being of all species.

In his essay, "[A Revolution That Is Arising From The Earth](#)", William Kotke states:

We who can read these words are civilized people who have been mentally conditioned by the culture of civilization and the industrial society from birth. We have precepts loaded into our subconscious minds which cause us to see reality in a certain way. To a native Maya person in the State of Chiapas, Mexico, the earth speaks through them. They live integrated with the earth in their everyday energy systems and in their mental attitudes. To them the fact that the earthlife has manifest these living things around us, and us, means that we are children of the Mother Earth and we speak as one of the voices of the earth. To the Maya this is obvious on a deep level. To us it is an interesting intellectual proposition only, because we have been conditioned by a cultural upbringing that filters out this deep understanding and we do not mentally link our life with the life of the living earth.

To the Maya security is the earth and its care. The Maya live with the earth and feed from its natural bounty. Historically for a million years our species has been very successful. We have been adapted to the earth life. We lived within the ecological web and energy flows of the earth. Our traditional migratory patterns carried us over our gathering areas. In the season when the game were fat in one place we went there, when the berries were ripe in another we went there. Our success was adaptation to the life of the earth. We also had a culture that respected the earth and living things. The proposition is simple. We are alive, we live because of the other living things which feed us, we are obligated to respect and encourage those other living things so that we too can live.

In order for these indicators of an appropriate revolution to be actualized, a new kind of human must emerge-a new species with conscious self-awareness that knows-not thinks or feels-that it is not "in harmony" with the earth, but that it is the earth. This knowledge can only be acquired if our species is willing to experience, not theorize, that it originated from something greater and emerged on this planet for the purpose of serving something greater in order to perpetuate its values throughout the earth community and for countless generations in the future.

This revolution has already begun and manifests itself in the mission and work of organizations like [Transition](#), [Business Alliance of Local Economies \(BALLE\)](#), and the [permaculture movement](#). These organizations are about much more than growing organic gardens. One of their principal functions is the revolutionizing of how money works-a revolution without which fundamental change is impossible. They are creating self-sufficiency and resilience in neighborhoods and local communities, both of which may serve as mainstays in the event of infrastructure collapse, food and water shortages, natural disasters, economic devastation, and loss of essential services.

The localization efforts of organizations such as these have far more implications than mere "emergency response" preparation. They will eventually become the new normal as the collapse of industrial civilization exacerbates. The sooner these systems become firmly in place, the more resilient their citizens will be in navigating a world that in a couple of decades may be unrecognizable by current standards. They have evolved not merely out of vision and ingenuity but out of a palpable sense that a new humanity is in the process of emerging-a humanity that functions optimally not in a global economy or through mass consciousness raising, but through networking and smallness of scale.

So with those who argue that a revolution is desperately needed, I would heartily agree-with the caveat that it must be an appropriate one, skillfully moving in response to the earth and the evolutionary threshold on which humans stand. It must focus on building vibrant and discerning communities who will keep ears and hearts to the ground, listening for what the earth is asking of them.

In closing this piece, I must notice that three years ago on the [Speaking Truth to Power](#) website, I wrote in depth about the fallacy of placing confidence in Barack Obama as the candidate who would "revolutionize" the United States. I was called cynical, narrow-minded, and hopelessly pessimistic. Three years later I am hard-pressed to find anyone who is enthusiastic about the record of President Obama or the likelihood that if he has a clue about anything, he would actually abdicate his Goldman-Sachs designed throne and implement the platform of "change" on which he ran for office. Even if he were to do so, there is no money for such an agenda, and a cataclysmic Gulf Oil disaster has become an unimaginable game-changer.

All of this only validates my premise that local action, self-sufficiency, and taking charge of issues in one's community are the essential ingredients of revolutionary change rather than dependence on a distant President and Congress, bought and orchestrated by the very system that is annihilating the earth community. Do not take my word for it. Research for yourself what the three organizations mentioned above have accomplished in the last three years. If you still insist on calling me cynical, I would argue that the definition of that word completely escapes you.

Carolyn Baker, Ph.D., is the author of [*Sacred Demise: Walking The Spiritual Path of Industrial Civilization's Collapse*](#) (2009 IUniverse) and manages her website [Speaking Truth to Power](#). She is also the author of [*U.S. History Uncensored: What Your High School Textbook Didn't Tell You*](#) (2006). She may be contacted at her site.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [12:50 PM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Noam Chomsky: Is the U.S. Gearing Up for the Destruction of Iran?

Is the U.S. Gearing Up for the Destruction of Iran?

By Noam Chomsky [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 15 2010 | AlterNet | ZMagazine

The dire threat of Iran is widely recognized to be the most serious foreign policy crisis facing the Obama administration. General Petraeus informed the Senate Committee on Armed Services in March 2010 that "the Iranian regime is the primary state-level threat to stability" in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, the Middle East and Central Asia, the primary region of US global concerns. The term "stability" here has its usual technical meaning: firmly under US control.

In June 2010 Congress strengthened the sanctions against Iran, with even more severe penalties against foreign companies. The Obama administration has been rapidly expanding US offensive capacity in the African island of Diego Garcia, claimed by Britain, which had expelled the population so that the US could build the massive base it uses for attacks in the Central Command area. The Navy reports sending a submarine tender to the island to service nuclear-powered guided-missile submarines with Tomahawk missiles, which can carry nuclear warheads. Each submarine is reported to have the striking power of a typical carrier battle group. According to a US Navy cargo manifest obtained by the Sunday Herald (Glasgow), the substantial military equipment Obama has dispatched includes 387 "bunker busters" used for blasting hardened underground structures. Planning for these "massive ordnance penetrators," the most powerful bombs in the arsenal short of nuclear weapons, was initiated in the Bush administration, but languished. On taking office, Obama immediately accelerated the plans, and they are to be deployed several years ahead of schedule, aiming specifically at Iran.

"They are gearing up totally for the destruction of Iran," according to Dan Plesch, director of the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy at the University of London. "US bombers and long range missiles are ready today to destroy 10,000 targets in Iran in a few hours," he said. "The firepower of US forces has quadrupled since 2003," accelerating under Obama.

The Arab press reports that an American fleet (with an Israeli vessel) passed through the Suez Canal on the way to the Persian Gulf, where its task is "to implement the sanctions against Iran and supervise the ships going to and from Iran." British and Israeli media report that Saudi Arabia is providing a corridor for Israeli bombing of Iran (denied by Saudi Arabia). On his return from Afghanistan to reassure NATO allies that the US will stay the course after the replacement of General McChrystal by his superior, General Petraeus, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen visited Israel to meet IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi and senior military staff along with intelligence and planning units, continuing the annual strategic dialogue between Israel and the U.S. The meeting focused "on the preparation by both Israel and the U.S. for the possibility of a nuclear capable Iran," according to Haaretz, which reports further that Mullen emphasized that "I always try to see challenges from Israeli perspective." Mullen and Ashkenazi are in regular contact on a secure line.

The increasing threats of military action against Iran are of course in violation of the UN Charter, and in specific violation of Security Council resolution 1887 of September 2009 which reaffirmed the call to all states to resolve disputes related to nuclear issues peacefully, in accordance with the Charter, which bans the use or threat of force.

Some analysts who seem to be taken seriously describe the Iranian threat in apocalyptic terms. Amitai Etzioni warns that "The U.S. will have to confront Iran or give up the Middle East," no less. If Iran's nuclear program proceeds, he asserts, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and other states will "move toward" the new Iranian "superpower." To rephrase in less fevered rhetoric, a regional alliance might take shape independent of the US. In the US army journal Military Review, Etzioni urges a US attack that targets not only Iran's nuclear facilities but also its non-nuclear military assets, including infrastructure -- meaning, the civilian society. "This kind of military action is akin to sanctions - causing 'pain' in order to change behaviour, albeit by much more powerful means."

What is the Threat, Exactly?

Such inflammatory pronouncements aside, what exactly is the Iranian threat? An authoritative answer is provided by military and intelligence reports to Congress in April 2010 [Lieutenant General Ronald L. Burgess, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, Statement before the Committee on Armed Services, US Senate, 14 April 2010; Unclassified Report on Military Power of Iran, April 2010; John J. Kruzel, American Forces Press Service, "[Report to Congress Outlines Iranian Threats](#)," April 2010.

The brutal clerical regime is doubtless a threat to its own people, though it does not rank particularly high in that respect in comparison to US allies in the region. But that is not what concerns the military and intelligence assessments. Rather, they are concerned with the threat Iran poses to the region and the world.

The reports make it clear that the Iranian threat is not military. Iran's military spending is "relatively low compared to the rest of the region," and of course minuscule as compared to the US. Iranian military doctrine is strictly "defensive, ... designed to slow an invasion and force a diplomatic solution to hostilities." Iran has only "a limited capability to project force beyond its borders." With regard to the nuclear option, "Iran's nuclear program and its willingness to keep open the possibility of developing nuclear weapons is a central part of its deterrent strategy."

Though the Iranian threat is not military aggression, that does not mean that it might be tolerable to Washington. Iranian deterrent capacity is considered an illegitimate exercise of sovereignty that interferes with US global designs. Specifically, it threatens US control of Middle East energy resources, a high priority of planners since World War II. As one influential figure advised, expressing a common understanding, control of these resources yields "substantial control of the world" (A. A. Berle).

But Iran's threat goes beyond deterrence. It is also seeking to expand its influence. Iran's "current five-year plan seeks to expand bilateral, regional, and international relations, strengthen Iran's ties with friendly states, and enhance its defense and deterrent capabilities. Commensurate with that plan, Iran is seeking to increase its stature by countering U.S. influence and expanding ties with regional actors while advocating Islamic solidarity." In short, Iran is seeking to "destabilize" the region, in the technical sense of the term used by General Petraeus. US invasion and military occupation of Iran's neighbors is "stabilization." Iran's efforts to extend its influence in neighboring countries is "destabilization," hence plainly illegitimate. It should be noted that such revealing usage is routine. Thus the prominent foreign policy analyst James Chace, former editor of the main establishment journal *Foreign Affairs*, was properly using the term "stability" in its technical sense when he explained that in order to achieve "stability" in Chile it was necessary to "destabilize" the country (by overthrowing the elected Allende government and installing the Pinochet dictatorship).

Beyond these crimes, Iran is also carrying out and supporting terrorism, the reports continue. Its Revolutionary Guards "are behind some of the deadliest terrorist attacks of the past three decades," including attacks on US military facilities in the region and "many of the insurgent attacks on Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces in Iraq since 2003." Furthermore Iran backs Hezbollah and Hamas, the major political forces in Lebanon and in Palestine -- if elections matter. The Hezbollah-based coalition handily won the popular vote in Lebanon's latest (2009) election. Hamas won the 2006 Palestinian election, compelling the US and Israel to institute the harsh and brutal siege of Gaza to punish the miscreants for voting the wrong way in a free election. These have been the only relatively free elections in the Arab world. It is normal for elite opinion to fear the threat of democracy and to act to deter it, but this is a rather striking case, particularly alongside of strong US support for the regional dictatorships, emphasized by Obama with his strong praise for the brutal Egyptian dictator Mubarak on the way to his famous address to the Muslim world in Cairo.

Israel/Palestine

The terrorist acts attributed to Hamas and Hezbollah pale in comparison to US-Israeli terrorism in the same region, but they are worth a look nevertheless.

On May 25 Lebanon celebrated its national holiday Liberation Day, commemorating Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon after 22 years, as a result of Hezbollah resistance -- described by Israeli authorities as "Iranian aggression" against

Israel in Israeli-occupied Lebanon (Ephraim Sneh). That too is normal imperial usage. Thus President John F. Kennedy condemned the "the assault from the inside" in South Vietnam, "which is manipulated from the North." This criminal assault by the South Vietnamese resistance against Kennedy's bombers, chemical warfare, programs to drive peasants to virtual concentration camps, and other such benign measures was denounced as "internal aggression" by Kennedy's UN Ambassador, liberal hero Adlai Stevenson. North Vietnamese support for their countrymen in the US-occupied South is aggression, intolerable interference with Washington's righteous mission. Kennedy advisors Arthur Schlesinger and Theodore Sorenson, considered doves, also praised Washington's intervention to reverse "aggression" in South Vietnam -- by the indigenous resistance, as they knew, at least if they read US intelligence reports. In 1955 the US Joint Chiefs of Staff had defined several types of "aggression," including "Aggression other than armed, i.e., political warfare, or subversion." For example, an internal uprising against a US-imposed police state, or elections that come out the wrong way. The usage is also common in scholarship and political commentary, and makes sense on the prevailing assumption that We Own the World.

Hamas resists Israel's military occupation and its illegal and violent actions in the occupied territories. It is accused of refusing to recognize Israel (political parties do not recognize states). In contrast, the US and Israel not only do not recognize Palestine, but have been acting relentlessly and decisively for decades to ensure that it can never come into existence in any meaningful form. The governing party in Israel, in its 1999 campaign platform, bars the existence of any Palestinian state -- a step towards accommodation beyond the official positions of the US and Israel a decade earlier, which held that there cannot be "an additional Palestinian state" between Israel and Jordan, the latter a "Palestinian state" by US-Israeli fiat whatever its benighted inhabitants and government might believe.

Hamas is charged with rocketing Israeli settlements on the border, criminal acts no doubt, though a fraction of Israel's violence in Gaza, let alone elsewhere. It is important to bear in mind, in this connection, that the US and Israel know exactly how to terminate the terror that they deplore with such passion. Israel officially concedes that there were no Hamas rockets as long as Israel partially observed a truce with Hamas in 2008. Israel rejected Hamas's offer to renew the truce, preferring to launch the murderous and destructive Operation Cast Lead against Gaza in December 2008, with full US backing, an exploit of murderous aggression without the slightest credible pretext on either legal or moral grounds.

Turkey, a Model for Democracy

The model for democracy in the Muslim world, despite serious flaws, is Turkey, which has relatively free elections, and has also been subject to harsh criticism in the US. The most extreme case was when the government followed the position of 95% of the population and refused to join in the invasion of Iraq, eliciting harsh condemnation from Washington for its failure to comprehend how a democratic government should behave: under our concept of democracy, the voice of the Master determines policy, not the near-unanimous voice of the population.

The Obama administration was once again incensed when Turkey joined with Brazil in arranging a deal with Iran to restrict its enrichment of uranium. Obama had praised the initiative in a letter to Brazil's president Lula da Silva, apparently on the assumption that it would fail and provide a propaganda weapon against Iran. When it succeeded, the US was furious, and quickly undermined it by ramming through a Security Council resolution with new sanctions against Iran that were so meaningless that China cheerfully joined at once -- recognizing that at most the sanctions would impede Western interests in competing with China for Iran's resources. Once again, Washington acted forthrightly to ensure that others would not interfere with US control of the region.

Not surprisingly, Turkey (along with Brazil) voted against the US sanctions motion in the Security Council. The other regional member, Lebanon, abstained. These actions aroused further consternation in Washington. Philip Gordon, the Obama administration's top diplomat on European affairs, warned Turkey that its actions are not understood in the US and that it must "demonstrate its commitment to partnership with the West," AP reported, "a rare admonishment of a crucial NATO ally."

The political class understands as well. Steven A. Cook, a scholar with the Council on Foreign Relations, observed that the critical question now is "How do we keep the Turks in their lane?" -- following orders like good democrats. A New York Times headline captured the general mood: "Iran Deal Seen as Spot on Brazilian Leader's Legacy." In brief, do what we say, or else.

There is no indication that other countries in the region favor US sanctions any more than Turkey does. On Iran's opposite border, for example, Pakistan and Iran, meeting in Turkey, recently signed an agreement for a new pipeline. Even more worrisome for the US is that the pipeline might extend to India. The 2008 US treaty with India supporting its nuclear programs -- and indirectly its nuclear weapons programs -- was intended to stop India from joining the pipeline, according to Moeed Yusuf, a South Asia adviser to the United States Institute of Peace, expressing a common interpretation. India and Pakistan are two of the three nuclear powers that have refused to sign the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), the third being Israel. All have developed nuclear weapons with US support, and still do.

Non-Proliferation Exemptions

No sane person wants Iran to develop nuclear weapons; or anyone. One obvious way to mitigate or eliminate this threat is to establish a nuclear weapons-free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East. The issue arose (again) at the NPT conference at United Nations headquarters in early May 2010. Egypt, as chair of the 118 nations of the Non-Aligned Movement, proposed that the conference back a plan calling for the start of negotiations in 2011 on a Middle East NWFZ, as had been agreed by the West, including the US, at the 1995 review conference on the NPT.

Washington still formally agrees, but insists that Israel be exempted -- and has given no hint of allowing such provisions to apply to itself. The time is not yet ripe for creating the zone, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated at the NPT conference, while Washington insisted that no proposal can be accepted that calls for Israel's nuclear program to be placed under the auspices of the IAEA or that calls on signers of the NPT, specifically Washington, to release information about "Israeli nuclear facilities and activities, including information pertaining to previous nuclear transfers to Israel." Obama's technique of evasion is to adopt Israel's position that any such proposal must be conditional on a comprehensive peace settlement, which the US can delay indefinitely, as it has been doing for 35 years, with rare and temporary exceptions.

At the same time, Yukiya Amano, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, asked foreign ministers of its 151 member states to share views on how to implement a resolution demanding that Israel "accede to" the NPT and throw its nuclear facilities open to IAEA oversight, AP reported.

It is rarely noted that the US and UK have a special responsibility to work to establish a Middle East NWFZ. In attempting to provide a thin legal cover for their invasion of the Iraq in 2003, they appealed to Security Council Resolution 687 (1991), which called on Iraq to terminate its development of weapons of mass destruction. The US and UK claimed that they had not done so. We need not tarry on the excuse, but that Resolution commits its signers to move to establish a NWFZ in the Middle East.

Parenthetically, we may add that US insistence on maintaining nuclear facilities in Diego Garcia undermines the NWFZ established by the African Union, just as Washington continues to block a Pacific NWFZ by excluding its Pacific dependencies.

Obama's rhetorical commitment to non-proliferation has received much praise, even a Nobel peace prize. One practical step in this direction is establishment of NWFZs. Another is to withdraw support for the nuclear programs of the three non-signers of the NPT. As often, rhetoric and actions are hardly aligned, in fact are in direct contradiction in this case, facts that pass with as little attention as most of what has just been briefly reviewed.

Instead of taking practical steps towards reducing the truly dire threat of nuclear weapons proliferation, the US is taking major steps towards reinforcing US control of the vital Middle East oil-producing regions, by violence if other means do not suffice. That is understandable and even reasonable, under prevailing imperial doctrine, however grim the consequences, yet another illustration of "the savage injustice of the Europeans" that Adam Smith deplored in 1776, with the command center since shifted to their imperial settlement across the seas.

Noam Chomsky is a linguist, social critic, and author of numerous articles and books, including *Failed States* and *Hopes and Prospects*.

Read more of Noam Chomsky's work at Chomsky.info.

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Building the Long War

by Staff Report [article link](#)

July 15 2010 | The Daily Bell

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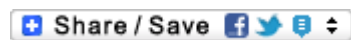
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Thursday, July 15, 2010

Laurence M. Vance: The American Warmonger's Bible

The American Warmonger's Bible

by Laurence M. Vance [article link](#)

July 15 2010 | LewRockwell

Two tools of government propaganda used to get young men to kill, maim, and destroy for the state are nationalism and religion. Put both together and you have a deadly combination.

Imperial Christians who equate patriotism with militarism and nationalism now have a book to guide them: [The American Patriot's Bible](#).

The publisher of this new Bible is Thomas Nelson Publishers. Now, this publisher has recently published some excellent books (e.g., the works of [Judge Napolitano](#)), but *The American Patriot's Bible* is certainly not one of them.

The general editor of *The American Patriot's Bible* is Richard G. Lee, founding pastor of First Redeemer Church in Atlanta and frequent speaker at conferences and on television. Dr. Lee is the author of twelve books, a trustee of Liberty University, and a board member of the National Religious Broadcasters. He was named "Father of the Year" by the Southeastern Father's Day Council and received the Ronald Reagan Leadership Award for 2007. Lee hosted a "Restoring America" conference in 2009 with assorted Republican Party apologists.

The American Patriot's Bible is not a new translation of the Bible. It uses the *New King James Version* that was published by Thomas Nelson in 1982, but "joining with the sacred text are stories of American heroes, quotations from many of America's greatest thinkers, and beautiful illustrations that present the rich heritage and tremendous future of our nation." This is done via special introductions to each book of the Bible, twelve full-color, four-page sections inserted randomly

throughout the Bible, and 254 brief articles on certain virtues and various patriotic and historical themes that appear near specific Bible verses in boxes within the text, on half pages, and sometimes on full pages. None of the articles actually comment on the biblical text. Certain words in the text are merely used as a springboard to launch into the subject of the article, which usually has nationalistic, militaristic, or political overtones. Other features of *The American Patriot's Bible* include an introduction, a subject index to the articles, a concordance to the Bible, maps, a list of the U.S. presidents, and a list of the fifty states with their dates of admission to the Union.

Before I even turned to the first book in the Bible, I realized that *The American Patriot's Bible* had a militaristic and nationalistic perspective that I was going to choke on. In addition to the usual pages in the front of some Bibles that are used to record births, deaths, and other family records, *The American Patriot's Bible* has a page to record "Military and Public Service." There is also a four-page section on "The Seven Principles of the Judeo-Christian Ethic." Now, there is certainly nothing wrong with following Judeo-Christian ethics, but under principle one, "The Dignity of Human Life," the attempt is made to justify U.S. military interventions around the world:

In the Declaration of Independence our nation's Founding Fathers wrote that everyone has "unalienable rights," and that among these rights are "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." We Americans not only believe this for *our* land, but also we send our brave military men and women around the world to defend the rights of those who are threatened.

Principle four, "The Right to a God-Centered Education," is also problematic because it accepts the existence of a government school system as legitimate. Any parent can give a child a God-centered education, either at home or at a Christian school. The idea that we should expect the public schools to give children a God-centered education is ludicrous. Government schools don't need to be "taken back" by Christians, they need to be abandoned.

Another disturbing sign is the prominent place given in *The American Patriot's Bible* to Abraham Lincoln – a man who is neither a role model for a Christian nor an example of a president who upheld the Constitution. In addition to the image of the Lincoln Memorial appearing on pages I-2, I-36, and on the front of the dust jacket; Lincoln's picture appears on pages vi, 488, 832, 1058, 1401, 1456, I-30, and I-32 (twice). Lincoln appears in a montage that includes his Lincoln Memorial statue on pages 236, 266, 296, 302, 339, 371, 407, 442, 475, 516, 531, and 550; Lincoln appears in a montage that includes Mount Rushmore on pages 561, 600, 704, 743, 756, and the rear flap of the dust jacket; Lincoln is quoted on pages I-2, I-32, I-36, 302, 488, 718, 823, 832, 527, 528, 1037, 1058, and 1328; Lincoln is mentioned on pages 78, 808, 1035, 1099, 1114, 1448, 1456, and I-37; Lincoln is discussed on pages I-30, 518, and 1401.

Like most study Bibles, each biblical book in *The American Patriot's Bible* is preceded by a brief one-page introduction. But there are two things that are different about these introductions.

First of all, at the top of the page of the introduction and the first page of the biblical book there is a montage that includes images of soldiers and/or naval ships, military aircraft, flags, national monuments, or national symbols. On the introduction page to each of the New Testament Gospels there is an image of soldiers raising a flag underneath the banner of the national motto "In God We Trust." All of the other books in the New Testament open with a montage containing the Statue of Liberty on the left with troops marching on the right.

The second thing that is disturbing about the book introductions is their content. Each introduction contains a paragraph that tries to relate the theme of the biblical book to some patriotic or nationalistic theme or an event in American history. For an example in the Old Testament, we can turn to the book of Nehemiah. The theme of the book is said to be "godly leadership." But who is put forth as an example of a godly leader like Nehemiah? It is the wretched Franklin Roosevelt. In the introduction to 2 Thessalonians in the New Testament, we read about how the Apostle Paul "always moved quickly to deal with heresy before it could damage the churches." We are told that he used the authority of his apostleship and did not seek anyone's permission. This is applied to George W. Bush saying that "America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our country." Then we are told that after the 9/11 attacks Bush "immediately announced a Global War on Terrorism, which commenced with the invasion of Afghanistan and the overthrow of the Taliban regime and Al-Quada." It is nothing short of sacrilege to mention [George WMD Bush](#) in the same paragraph with the Apostle Paul.

The subjects of the twelve four-page color sections that appear throughout *The American Patriot's Bible* are: The Bible and American Presidents, Christianity in Colonial America, Faith of the Founders, The American Revolution, The Great Awakening, The Bible and American Education, Christianity and the American Frontier, The Civil War, Monuments to American Patriotism, World War II, Christianity and Equal Rights, The Bible and Famous Americans.

In the section titled "The Bible and American Presidents" we are given quotes about the Bible from eleven presidents. This is all well and good, but no one should think for a minute that these eleven men put into practice the precepts of the book they spoke so highly of. In "Faith and the Founders" we are told that 93 percent of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention "were members of Christian churches." If this is true then the fact that the Constitution never mentions the Lord Jesus Christ other than a reference to "the year of our Lord" is even more disturbing. The section on World War II is especially disheartening with its picture of the loathsome FDR, its claim that Japan, Italy, and Germany wanted to rule the world, and its simplistic explanation of the coming of the war. The picture of a smiling President Obama in the section titled "Christianity and Equal Rights" is also disturbing. What is a man doing pictured in a Bible who was the most liberal member of the U.S. Senate, who has spent his life in the service of racial preference, who has had the most radical of associations, who practices an aberrant Christianity, who orders and jokes about Predator drone attacks, and who is an economic corporatist that believes in the redistribution of wealth?

The third major feature of *The American Patriot's Bible* is its 254 articles on certain virtues and various patriotic and historical themes. The articles are a mixed bag of virtues, principles, patriotism, nationalism, and militarism, with a heavy emphasis on U.S. presidents.

The small articles in boxes near specific biblical verses contain quotes from famous people about God, the Bible, religion in society, or some virtue, tell us where in the Bible a particular president placed his hand when he took the presidential oath of office, and reference certain events and documents in American history. Seeing the first one, which appears on page 44, made me nauseous – it is a quote on freedom from the evil warmonger and torture master Dick Cheney. Even worse is the sight of a quote from Colin Powell on U.S. foreign military interventions that goes with John 3:16. It is implied to the reader that just as "God so loved the world that he gave" so the United States sends its "fine men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders," asking nothing in return but enough land to bury our dead soldiers.

When these articles take up a page or half a page, it is more of the same, but with longer quotes and the addition of images. Presidential warmongers are prominently featured: FDR on page 217, George W. Bush on page 292, Woodrow Wilson on page 586, Abraham Lincoln on page 1058, and Theodore Roosevelt on page 1071. This is fitting since the focus of the articles is often times related to war. This time, however, it wasn't until the second one that I became nauseous. Appearing on page 6, it is the story behind and words of the blasphemous "patriotic" song [The Battle Hymn of the Republic](#). The identification of the slave-owning George Washington as the "American Moses" (p. 64) is ludicrous as is the quote from the denier of Christ's deity and miracles, Thomas Jefferson, on the moral precepts of Jesus (p. 1096).

The last thing I want to read about in the notes of a Bible is something about a [U.S. president](#). Although some of the historical information in *The American Patriot's Bible* is interesting and informative, it belongs in a separate book, not in the word of God. And the American history that is presented is highly selective.

Gregory Boyd, the author of the highly-recommended book [The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power Is Destroying the Church](#) (Zondervan, 2006), has written several times about *The American Patriot's Bible*. Because the conclusions he has reached are also my own, I will simply list some of them here:

- * It unashamedly glorifies nationalistic violence
- * Selective retelling of American history
- * Overt celebration of America's violent victories over our national enemies
- * The text of the Bible is used merely as an excuse to further the patriotic agenda of the commentators
- * The glory of nationalistic violence permeates this Bible
- * The commentators attempt to give their idealized version of American history divine authority by weaving it into the biblical narrative

- * The biblical text has been reduced to nothing more than an artificial pretext to further a particular nationalistic and political agenda
- * Saturated with this nationalistic, "fight-for-God-and-country," mindset
- * A very high percentage of the commentaries sprinkled throughout this Bible exalt American wars and their heroes
- * Offers no commentary on any passages related to our instruction to love and do good to our enemies
- * A version of the Bible whose sole purpose is to reinforce the nationalism and celebrate the military victories of a particular country
- * Virtually incarnates the nationalistic idolatry that has afflicted the Church for centuries
- * It excludes from consideration almost every aspect of American history that could blemish the image of America or its heroes
- * Especially in the Old Testament, an explicit parallel is drawn between Israel and America
- * This intense glorification of national violence constitutes a central theme of this ill-conceived Bible

You can read Boyd's blog posts about *The American Patriot's Bible* [here](#) and [here](#) and his review [here](#).

"If you love America and the Scriptures, you will treasure this Bible," says the introduction to *The American Patriot's Bible*. I think it would be more accurate to say that if you love American exceptionalism, American nationalism, American imperialism, and American militarism, you will treasure this Bible. Many Christians who love America *and* the Scriptures know better than to equate patriotism with any of these things.

Laurence M. Vance writes from Pensacola, FL. He is the author of [Christianity and War and Other Essays Against the Warfare State](#) and [The Revolution that Wasn't](#). His newest book is [Rethinking the Good War](#). Visit his [website](#).

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Gun Ownership: 'An Obligation to God'

Extremist Christians Aim to Create Armed Militias Against "Godless" Federal Government

Christian Reconstructionists believe civil government should be reformed according to the dictates of biblical law. Some advocate for followers to take up arms.

By Sarah Posner and Julie Ingersoll [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 12 2010 | Religion Dispatches | AlterNet

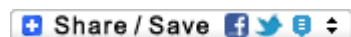
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Rand Paul and the Influence of Christian Reconstructionism

by Julie Ingersoll [article link](#)

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Thursday, July 15, 2010

Rick Wolff: Austerity: Why and for Whom?

Austerity: Why and for Whom?

by Rick Wolff [article link](#)

July 15 2010 | CommonDreams

Clearly, the global capitalist crisis that started in 2007 will be neither short nor shallow. The government rescue of the US financial industry pumped enough extra money into the economy and sufficiently reduced interest rates to give banks and the stock market the heavily hyped "recovery" that started March 2009 and is now over. What is worse, their recovery never reached much of the rest of the economy. Efforts to broaden the recovery or extend it beyond one limp year have failed. That failure cost Washington trillions in borrowed funds from lenders who now demand guarantees that those loans will be repaid to them with interest. Similar demands now confront many other governments who likewise borrowed heavily to cope with the crisis in their countries.

The guarantee demanded by lenders is "austerity." Lenders want governments to raise taxes or cut government spending or both. Governments will then have more money available to pay interest on loans and to repay those loans. Governments that fail to impose austerity will face higher interest on new and renewed loans or will be denied loans which would cripple those governments' usual operations. Austerity is yet another extreme burden imposed on the global economy by the capitalist crisis (in addition to the millions suffering unemployment, reduced global trade, etc.).

Who are these lenders demanding austerity? The globally active financial enterprises -- mostly banks that collapsed in the crisis and were rescued by their home governments -- are, together, also major lenders to those governments. Banks own their own governments' debts but also other governments' debts. For example, major banks in France and Germany are among the Greek government's chief creditors. US banks and related financial enterprises hold significant amounts of other governments' debts and other nations' banks own much US government debt.

Global capitalism's 2007 crisis froze the credit system that sustains capitalist production. Private borrowers -- enterprises and individuals - could no longer repay loans because their investments had generated too little and their incomes had failed to grow enough. Banks had failed to properly assess risks in deciding how much to lend to whom. They therefore stopped lending to private borrowers because that had become too risky. As private borrowers defaulted and new lending atrophied, banks' capital and their profits collapsed. The whole capitalist system ground toward a halt because credit became unavailable. The only solution most leaders in capitalist countries could conceive was to unfreeze credit by having the government guarantee bank solvency, guarantee many private debts, invest massively in and lend to private banks, and become the ultimate borrower of a huge portion of loanable funds. Banks everywhere lent to governments because it had become unsafe to lend to almost anyone else. Governments everywhere used the borrowed money to rescue banks and other financial enterprises.

This peculiar "nationalization" of debt served capitalism by having the government temporarily function as the lender and borrower of last resort. Nationalization unfroze the credit system sufficiently to stop the crisis from collapsing global capitalism. Few policy-makers (and few others) in 2008 and early 2009 worried much about the consequences of so massively increasing government debts. The looming possible capitalist system collapse overwhelmed worry about any "longer run."

The international banks that were rescued (from their own bad loans and investments) by governments now worry that governments they lent to won't be able to repay those loans. Banks threaten to make further loans much more costly or even impossible unless those governments impose "austerity." Most political leaders recognize that the banks' threats, if carried out under their watch, would end their careers quickly and badly. All capitalists see in possible government defaults the

specter of another credit freeze with terrifying ramifications for global capitalism. Still worse for those banks: governments in default would not likely be able to borrow again to rescue banks again.

Nearly all current political leaders of major capitalist countries responded positively to the banks' demand for austerity (as in Canada's recent G-20 meeting). This immediately raised a basic political conflict always simmering inside capitalism: who will pay increased taxes and who will suffer decreased government spending? Militants in Europe have already marched and struck against austerity as an unacceptable plan to make workers pay to fix capitalists' crises; more general strikes are set in many European nations with a Europe-wide general strike now scheduled for September 29. Meanwhile, capitalists work with politicians to define as "reasonable in crisis times" austerity programs mixing both tax increases (chiefly on workers) and spending cuts (chiefly on workers).

An Athens trucker says, "Public employees here don't work hard enough, so it is reasonable to cut their pay." A Parisian clerk thinks it "reasonable to postpone the official retirement age a few years; we all live longer now." A Minneapolis office worker agrees that it is "reasonable, in crisis times, to get by with fewer public services." A New York laboratory technician supports a new tax on cell-phones as "probably reasonable; after all, people overuse them." Remarkably, such notions of "reasonable" are silent about other possible and, to say the least, more "reasonable" forms of austerity.

Let's consider some alternative "reasonable" kinds of austerity (i.e., austerity for others) and then question austerity itself. Serious efforts to collect income taxes from US-based multinational corporations, especially those who use internal pricing mechanisms to escape US taxation, would generate vast new federal revenues. The same applies to wealthy individuals. The US has no federal property tax on holdings of stocks, bonds, and cash accounts (states and localities levy no such property taxes either). If the federal government levied a 1 per cent tax on assets between \$100,000 to 499,000, and 1.5 per cent on assets above \$500,000, that would raise much new federal revenue (everyone's first \$100,000 could be exempted just as the existing US income tax exempts the first few thousands of dollars of individual incomes). Exiting the Iraq and Afghanistan disasters would do likewise. Ending tax exemptions for super-rich private educational institutions (Harvard, Yale, etc.) and for religious institutions (church-goers would then need to pay the costs of their churches) would be among the many other such alternative "reasonable" austerity measures. Comparable alternatives apply -- and are being struggled over -- in other countries.

A capitalist system that generates so massive a crisis, spreads it globally, and then proposes mass austerity to "overcome" it has lost the right to continue unchallenged. Should we not be publicly debating whether America (and the world) might be better served by going beyond capitalism? Can we not learn from capitalism's repeated cycles (failures) and change to a new, non-capitalist system? Having learned hard lessons from the first socialist attempts during the last century in Russia, China, and beyond, can we not rise to the challenge to make a new attempt that avoids their failures and builds on their strengths? When better than now?

Rick Wolff is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and also a Visiting Professor at the Graduate Program in International Affairs of the New School University in New York. He is the author of [New Departures in Marxian Theory](#) (Routledge, 2006) among many other publications. Check out Rick Wolff's documentary film on the current economic crisis, [Capitalism Hits the Fan](#). Visit Wolff's [web site](#) and order a copy of his new book [Capitalism Hits the Fan: The Global Economic Meltdown and What to Do about It](#).

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Wednesday, July 14, 2010

Mary Mellor: The Future of Money

The financial crisis has shattered the neoliberal illusion that a globalised banking and monetary system can operate independently of traditional state support and regulation. But the reforms that have so far been proposed, as bankers rush to return to the pre-crisis bonus culture, do not go nearly far enough, argues Mary Mellor. If the people have to prop up the system when it fails, why should they not also have control over the supply of money in the first place?

The Future of Money

By Mary Mellor [article link](#) [article link](#)

12th May 2010 | Red Pepper | STWR

At the height of the financial crisis, the total public financial exposure in rescuing the world's financial systems was around \$15 trillion – a quarter of world GDP. Most of this was not used, but the existence of public backing prevented a worldwide collapse of financial institutions. This vital role of the public sector has in practice been ignored, as the surviving banks return to the bonus culture, benefiting from reduced competition and further state support through, for example, quantitative easing (increased money supply).

Not all states could support their bloated financial sectors. Iceland collapsed with financial commitments up to ten times its GDP. Britain, with a financial sector worth around five times GDP, could have faced similar problems. Globally the financial sector eclipses world GDP by at least ten times.

Finance Is Not Private

Why do governments feel obliged to spend untold billions rescuing the banks and financial sector when other businesses are often left to fail? The answer is that the financial sector is not a private sector at all. It embraces a public function, the issue and circulation of money – something that has been appropriated by private capital.

The contemporary banking and financial system has hijacked this public activity for its own benefit. However, when the financial system goes into crisis, the need to retain this public function means that it becomes a liability on the public, as represented by the state or equivalent monetary authority. As John McFall, chair of the UK Treasury select committee, wrote (Guardian, 9 January 2009), 'After the extraordinary self-induced implosion of the financial system, the future of the market system now rests in the hands of governments. The politicians are the only show in town.' The financial crisis and the public response have revealed both the instability of the global financial system and the importance of a public monetary authority of last resort.

The latter half of the 20th century saw a rapid growth in the financial sector as people became enmeshed in debts (particularly consumer debts and mortgages), as collective and public financial security was abandoned in favour of personal investments (particularly pensions), and because there was benefit to be had from inflated financial assets (particularly housing). Even institutional investors were tempted by the promise of higher profits in the most speculative areas, such as hedge funds.

With such a large proportion of the population entangled in the financial system, a demand for public rescue became more likely. A collapse in the financial system is much more threatening to social order than failures in the productive sector. If one factory fails it does not automatically close the rest (they may even benefit from less competition). But if a bank fails the panic threatens to become systemic as people lose confidence in the banking system. This alone was a major reason why states had to step in.

The need for state intervention has exposed the contradictions of financialised capitalism and its reliance on 'Wall Street socialism'. A pivotal point was the rescue of the US investment bank Bear Stearns. The US monetary authorities were not only bailing out the retail banks, but finance capital as well. When the US Treasury later tried to isolate the investment sector by letting Lehman's fail, there were nearly fatal consequences for the banking sector. The financial sector was so interconnected that a crisis of default in the US subprime sector could bring down a relatively small bank in the UK via the functioning of the global money market and the drying up of credit.

Public Foundations of the Financial System

The financial system is concerned with the issue and circulation of money. Within capitalism the aim is to direct money to the most profitable use.

Money is a strange phenomenon, real and yet not real. In essence it is a promise. Holding money is a claim on any resources, goods or services that are denominated in money terms. However, for these claims to be realised, the sellers of resources, goods or services must trust in the continued value of that money.

Historically, money has been made of a commodity that can itself be resold, such as gold, but today it mostly consists of base metal, paper, or merely electronic record. People trust it because convention and experience tells them it will be honoured. It is also backed by a public monetary authority as legal tender that has a stated value.

This is critical to public responsibility for money. All monetary activities designated in pounds are collectable from the British banking system (or its international agents). Underlying the whole banking system is the Bank of England. Despite it having been made independent in policy terms, the Bank's authority rests on the financial viability of the nation in terms of its productivity (GDP) and its ability to collectively assemble money through taxes.

As has been shown in Iceland, the people, through the state, are forced to take on financial liabilities created by the private sector. If a company produces a car that ceases to function, the owner does not go to the state asking for a new one. With money, however, this is exactly what the holder of that money will do. People invested in Icesave, the Icelandic online bank, because it offered higher interest. Despite the fact that the bank was linked to a small country of only 300,000 people, investors did not see it as a risky investment.

When the parent bank failed, depositors turned en masse to the British government and demanded payment in full. In order to secure the safety of its own banks, the UK lent Iceland the money to repay deposits – a huge debt on the Icelandic people against which they are now protesting.

How could Iceland's banks have financial commitments several times larger than its economy? Partly this was because the banks took in deposits from around the world, but mainly it was because banks can themselves create money. They do this by issuing bank credit – loans.

Capitalism has been built on bank credit. Traders and companies have borrowed bank money to set up their businesses. Recently most credit issue has been related to consumption or financial investments such as housing. The illusion is that banks act as intermediaries between savers and borrowers, but that is not so. Banks take in deposits, some paying interest. They also issue loans and charge interest. There is no direct relationship between savers and borrowers.

All deposits are returnable, regardless of what loans are still outstanding. Banks can also lend much more than they have in deposits, traditionally up to ten times more and even more in recent years. This is how financial sectors can explode in total value, eclipsing the productive economy and inflating financial assets.

Recently bank lending has contributed to the vast use of 'leverage' to enable the investments of the rich to go even further. Hedge funds, private equity investments and the investment arms of banks use borrowed money to inflate their speculative gambles. Some of these may even be gambles against the banks themselves or the national currency. As more money is issued it floods into the financial system and becomes part of the waves of money looking for a profitable home. As it is impossible to separate the interests of bank depositors or pension holders from financial speculators, in a crisis the whole system must be secured.

In such a crisis, the public underpinning of the money and banking system becomes clear. As all bank-created credit is designated in the national currency, this becomes a liability on the state. The logic would be that such a public liability should also be seen as a public resource. If the people are to be made ultimately responsible for whatever money is issued in their name, should they not have a say about how this money is used?

Far from having democratically controlled access to the process of credit issue, the public, as represented by the state, has itself to borrow from the capitalist owners and controllers of the nation's money supply or tax money for public expenditure as it circulates. Today more than 95 per cent of money issue is through bank credit. Historically states controlled much higher levels of money issue as coinage. As expenditure on social or public needs are seen as secondary to privatised economic forces, the private sector determines how much public expenditure can, or cannot, be 'afforded'.

Privatised control of money issue creates the impression that it is the private market that is creating wealth. Certainly it is making money, quite literally, largely through issuing it to itself as leverage to swell speculative trading. Private ownership and control of money issue has created huge differences of wealth. The mass of the people can only hope for a trickle down of economic activity through the consumption of the champagne-swilling traders and increasing numbers of billionaires. On the illusion that the manipulators of money have actually generated the wealth they gamble with, those playing the money markets demand a huge percentage of the product. The levels of pay and bonuses have become so obscenely bloated that they have become an economic 'gated community' set apart from ordinary mortals by their wealth. In fact they have stolen what should be a public resource and harnessed it for private benefit.

The Contradictions of Privatised Finance

Financialised capitalism rests on its capacity to create credit to lend to itself to inflate its speculative profits and financial assets. But financial asset inflation is always a pyramid scheme, whose value will collapse as soon as there are no new investors.

Traditionally states had a concentration of financial power through their ability to issue money as currency and tax it back. Capitalism has similar power through its control of financial resources. It creates money and calls it back with interest. This puts a growth dynamic into the economy. More money must come back than has been issued; this in turn demands that more money be created.

The neoliberal rationale for private control of money issue is that the market is more 'efficient'. This is despite the endemic tendency to crisis in financialised capitalism. People have been encouraged to trust their future security in terms of pensions and savings to the financial markets, which in itself creates the conditions for a boom.

While hedge speculators can make money on rising or falling assets, for most people money can only be made on inflating financial assets such as housing or equities. This requires constant creation of credit to fuel the new buyers, a phenomenon that was clearly seen in the mortgage market. When the market has peaked and no one is willing to take on more credit, or the borrowers can no longer pay, the value of the financial assets must fall. Even in the case of hedge speculators, winners will be balanced by losers.

Why were the banks so desperate to lend money recklessly to homebuyers and to develop such complex financial packages? The answer lies in the demand for increased profits to raise dividends and share prices. The bonus strategy of payment in shares also drove this. In such a situation banks engaged in the most profitable aspect of banking, which was also the most risky. It is not without irony that financialised capitalism fell because of its exploitation of the very poor. As capitalism runs out of a market for its goods, services or investments, all that is left is the poor. In the case of financialised capital this was the subprime householder. However, the subprime borrowers did not cause financialised capitalism to fail; the cause was its own contradictions.

Profit-driven banks must always be tempted towards speculation, no matter how many firewalls are put up between deposits and investments. For this reason the calls for narrow banking or smaller banks will not work. As long as the companies running the banks are driven by capitalist values they must be driven by the drive for profit, and therefore risk. This would not be so important if the activities of the privatised banking sector were not a liability on the public. But the financial system is interconnected and the only way to save some parts is to save the whole. The speculative sector can only be separated if the deposit-based sector is not part of the capitalist system and if its credit creation capacity is brought under democratic control.

The private control of banking and finance is fundamentally flawed in that its neoliberal claim to financial freedom is in contradiction to the social foundation of money systems. The crisis has also undermined the claim that through global financialisation a substantial portion of national populations can sustain their economic future through appreciating financial assets. Far from 'rolling back' the state, the implosion of deregulated finance has directly contradicted the neoliberal case that the market and its money system is a self-regulating process that would be distorted by state intervention.

Under the illusion that money was a neutral representation of the wealth of the market, financial institutions operated far and wide. Financial traders speculated on currencies and borrowed from low-interest countries to invest in higher-interest ones. Claiming that their industry was global they played off countries against each other, demanding favourable tax status or lodging themselves in tax havens. In doing so they undermined the conditions of their own existence, the public authority of money.

A major problem for countries such as Greece or Argentina is that they have considerable problems in raising tax with substantial informal economies and high levels of tax avoidance. Finance may have escaped regulation but it has also separated itself from the legitimisation of money through public authority. This led the sector to expand to such an extent that the amounts of money at risk threatened the solvency of countries that had residual responsibility for their activities.

The Need for Radical Change

Proposed solutions to the financial crisis tend to involve more regulation and the break up or separation of banking activities, but these merely scratch the surface. The financial sector is not only too big; it embodies massive contradictions. In particular, the social role of finance makes it impossible for monetary authorities to let the system fail. This creates moral hazard on an epic scale, 'Wall Street socialism' with massive benefits for the financial elite and costs and liability for the many.

Given that the public nature of money makes the financial system a public liability, there is no case for its private ownership and control. As bank credit issue is the main engine of money creation in modern societies, how that money is issued and circulated is a crucial question. The allocation of that credit determines economic priorities.

Under capitalism the only priority is private profit. On this basis global speculative ventures are supported while local, particularly social, businesses are marginalised.

The allocation of credit is only part of the problem, however. The main question must be why the private banking system should have control of the monetary system at all. Historically this was developed through the link between trading money, promissory notes and bills of exchange, which were exchanged for bank credit notes designated in the national currency (legal tender). More recently the system has shifted to 'sight accounts', money records rather than cash in hand. The question that needs to be asked is: why is the private issue of notes and coin (counterfeiting) punished by law while the private creation of sight accounts is seen as a natural function of banking?

Capitalist control of the financial system has played a major trick on the public. Given that bank credit is created out of fresh air, like fresh air it should be a public resource, not a private horn of plenty. Decisions about the allocation of that credit should be made democratically. Private profit should not be the only criterion for money issue.

Nor should all money be issued as debt with the interest charged accruing to the issuing financial institution. Debt-based money builds in a growth dynamic that prevents the emergence of a more socially and ecologically sustainable economic system. Instead money could be issued without debt as grants or interest-free loans. The only reason this is not done is that capitalism has ideologically captured economic reasoning. The right of banks to issue money for profit is not challenged.

If people demand to issue money themselves or demand that social and ecological priorities come first they will be told that 'this cannot be afforded'. The pretence is that the market puts some kind of brake on money creation and allocates it most efficiently. The recent crisis shows that neither of these claims is true. Any money creation by the public is decried as inflationary, while massive inflation of the capitalist financial system was given the euphemism 'capital growth'. The public were to be grateful for the few crumbs of taxes that were reluctantly extracted from the financial sector.

In fact, there is no reason why money should be issued through the private banking system. It may be that with money under democratic control the public would vote to give financial resources back to the private sector, but it is more likely that social expenditure would be prioritised. The private sector would then have to re-orient its activities to serving public needs. This could form the basis of an economy in which growth would occur in response to social need, rather than the demand for ever expanding profits. Money circulation would return to the production of goods and services and not the never never land of perpetual financial growth. The idea that the whole of society could secure itself on constantly inflating financial assets is a total illusion.

The financial crisis has revealed the financial system's enormous power and lack of democratic control. Money and finance, nationally and internationally, must be socially and politically re-embedded to enable socially just and ecologically sustainable economies to emerge. Rather than asking 'can the financial crisis be the basis of radical change?' the crisis must be the basis of radical change if we are not to continue on the capitalist financial merry-go-round until we all fall off.

Mary Mellor is a professor of social science at Northumbria University. Her book [The Future of Money: From Financial Crisis to Public Resource](#) is published by Pluto Press.

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Wayne Ellwood: Nature's Bottom Line

Ecological collapse is all around. But faith in economic growth as the only path to prosperity shows no sign of fading. Wayne Ellwood examines the folly of endless growth on a finite planet.

Nature's Bottom Line

By Wayne Ellwood [article link](#) [article link](#)

13 July 2010 | Countercurrents | ecosocialism

Excerpt:

Charles Darwin was a consummate scientist – meticulous and rigorous. He spent nearly 20 years sifting his research, honing his analysis and polishing his prose before publishing his groundbreaking work, *On the Origin of Species*, in November 1859.¹

Darwin's slim volume was what we would call a 'game changer'; a revolutionary work that fundamentally altered the way human beings see themselves and the natural world. Today most of us are familiar with his theory of 'natural selection' – the foundation of modern evolutionary biology. But 150 years ago, Darwin was sailing into choppy waters. The Church of England set rigid boundaries and his thesis was clearly offside – a challenge to the orthodox view that humans were a separate, unique part of God's creation and that all life was divinely concocted and unchangeable.

The establishment mocked him. There was intense public debate. But Darwin was unflinching. Today his core idea that all animals and plants evolve and adapt through natural selection is the bedrock of modern life sciences. He opened the door to a new world – a door which religious fundamentalists and 'intelligent design' proponents are still trying to close.

Darwin's long battle has disturbing echoes today. We, too, are trapped in the same sort of false illusion that stymied critical thought before his radical breakthrough. Except the myth that envelops us is more dangerous and even more deeply rooted.

Our great sustaining myth is economic growth: faith that the economy can grow forever, that there are no limits to the wealth we can create from the natural resources of the Earth. Growth, measured by an increasing Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is what drives government policy worldwide. The equation has been drummed into us for so long that it's received wisdom. Growth equals prosperity and jobs. Growth equals progress (see 'History of an idea', below).

Yet this is a fairly recent turn of events. Using GDP as a tool to measure growth has only been around since the late 1940s when the UN System of National Accounts was developed. For most of human history economic growth was a mere blip. Only the last eight generations of humans have experienced consistent growth (out of an estimated 125,000 generations in total). As the father of green economics, Herman Daly, writes: 'Historically, steady state is the normal condition; growth is an aberration.'² By 'steady state' Daly means an economy with a constant population and 'the lowest feasible flows of matter and energy from the first stage of production to the last stage of consumption'.

The latest global economic slump underlines our reliance on growth. What happens when the economy stumbles? Financial markets crash, property values plummet, bankruptcies pile up, unemployment soars and social pathologies multiply. Thus the resurgence of Keynesian economics. Prime the pump with billions in government funds. Pray that tax breaks and fiscal stimulus boost investment, production and jobs.

Yet the world already produces way too much stuff, a lot of it unnecessary and much of it useless. We go on churning out mountains of consumer goods because it's good for growth. As long as the economy keeps growing, things will be OK. Growth keeps people employed, investment profitable and the endless cycle of production and consumption spinning. Increases in productivity and the restless search for profits drive the process. Endless accumulation and expansion is the core of capitalism.

Consider this: the world economy grew more than seven-fold from 1950 to 2000. It's projected to do the same again by 2050. At current rates of growth (before the recent global meltdown) the economy was doubling every 15 years, a breathtaking number when you consider that it took all of human history to hit the \$6 trillion world economy of 1950.³

As the US writers Fred Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster note: 'No-growth capitalism is an oxymoron: when growth ceases the system is in a state of crisis.' The upshot is that the natural environment, on which human life and the human economy depend, is sidelined – 'not as a place with inherent boundaries within which human beings must live together with earth's other species, but as a realm to be exploited in a process of growing economic expansion.'⁴

The uncomfortable truth is that the physical resources of the biosphere are finite. We're not approaching the ecological limits to growth; we're well past them. And in the process we're fouling the globe with our wastes and threatening the natural systems on which humanity and all other species depend. The statistics of ecological decline could fill a library. We're chewing through massive quantities of renewable and non-renewable resources at a breakneck speed.

In 2005 the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, a collaborative work of more than 10,000 scientists, found 60 per cent of 'ecosystem services' – things like climate regulation, the water cycle, pollination, global fisheries, natural waste treatment – were being degraded or used unsustainably. 'Human activity is putting such a heavy strain on the natural functions of the Earth,' the report warned, 'that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain human endeavour can no longer be taken for granted.'

The now familiar 'Ecological Footprint' model supports this conclusion. It's a way of asking how much we're extracting from the planet to live the way we do. Conventional economics tends to see the environment as a subset of the economy. The footprint approach does the reverse, comparing humanity's ecological impact – resources consumed and waste produced – with the amount of productive land and water available to supply key ecosystem services. It deals in averages so the rich/poor divide is blurred. But the message is clear. It takes about 1.8 hectares to sustain the average person on Earth. Those of us in the rich world are way above the average: Canadians use about eight hectares. Americans use ten, more than five times the average. In 1961, human beings used about half the Earth's biocapacity; by 2006 we were using 44 per cent more than is available.⁵ Mathis Wackernagel, one of the founders of the footprint analysis, says we will need the equivalent of two Earths by the late 2030s to keep up with our demands. Ecologists call this phenomenon 'overshoot'. It's a temporary state that becomes more untenable as stocks of renewable and non-renewable resources are depleted. Wackernagel again: 'Since the 1980s we've been drawing down the biosphere's principal rather than living off its annual interest. To support our consumption, we have been liquidating resource stocks and allowing carbon dioxide to accumulate in the atmosphere.'⁵

Oil is the main culprit. The burning of fossil fuels, especially petroleum, powers the global economy. Oil is an extraordinary feat of concentrated energy: three large teaspoons of crude contain about the same amount of energy as eight hours of human manual labour. The geologist Colin J Campbell hit the nail on the head: 'It's as if each one of us had a team of slaves working for us for next to nothing.'⁶

Napoleon said an army marches on its stomach; our modern, globalized economy marches on oil. But it's a Faustian bargain. The costs now exceed the benefits. Take the climate system, a key 'natural service' threatened by human-made greenhouse gas emissions, mostly CO₂, the main by-product from the combustion of fossil fuels. The more oil and coal we burn, the more CO₂ is pumped into the atmosphere and the more we tip the balance.

Leading climate scientists say a target of 350 parts per million (ppm) of CO₂ may avoid dangerous climate change. We're currently at 390 ppm and projected to hit 650 ppm by the end of this century. This translates into an average increase in global temperature of about 4 degrees Celsius. If this projection plays out we're in big trouble. Large parts of Africa, China,

India and Latin America would become desert or near-desert. Heard the term ‘environmental refugees’? Keep it in mind, because you’re going to be hearing it a lot more.

Even on its own terms growth isn’t working. We avoid talking about the skewed distribution of the planet’s wealth and income, dreaming instead that we can grow our way out of the problem. So the richest 20 per cent of the world’s population consumes the lion’s share of resources, while the poorest 80 per cent get by on the crumbs. And the ratios are getting worse. Growth is an excuse for continued inequality. But more importantly, countless studies show that beyond a certain point higher levels of material consumption don’t lead to increased wellbeing or happiness. Per capita GDP has tripled in the US since 1950 but the percentage of people who say they are happy has declined since the 1970s. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett in their book, *The Spirit Level*, argue that poor nations with lower inequality have higher levels of wellbeing than richer but more unequal nations.⁷ We place growth above equality and pay the price in what’s been called the ‘hidden injuries of class’. Shorter, unhealthier and unhappier lives addicted to a mindless consumerism which is depleting the planet’s resources.

Free market cheerleaders believe that technology and human ingenuity will solve the problem. The economy can be ‘decoupled’ from material inputs. Improved technology will allow us to produce more wealth with less energy, materials and waste. This is whistling in the dark. Between 1970 and 2000, rich countries saw impressive gains in energy efficiency of up to 40 per cent. But average improvements of two per cent a year were eclipsed by growth rates of three per cent or more. Increased technical efficiency is swamped by increased consumption. A recent report by the New Economics Foundation found that to stabilize carbon emissions at 350 ppm by 2050 the carbon intensity (CO₂ per unit of production) of the global economy would need to fall by 95 per cent.⁸ Ramping up GDP without improving technological efficiency leads to more environmental damage. Yet improving efficiency triggers more growth, which leads to the same result.

We’ve been captured by a myth far more alluring than the one that Charles Darwin confronted 150 years ago: the dream of perpetual economic growth. In the North we have been living beyond our ecological means for decades, consuming too much and producing more waste than the environment can absorb, while inequality grows.

The global population is expected to jump by 3 billion in the next 40 years – more than the entire population in 1950. Most of that increase will be in the South, where poverty is entrenched and living standards desperate. How will those next three billion live? Justice demands that we in the rich countries ratchet back our growth and clear some space for those who need it. The fate of the Earth may depend on it.

Are we up for it?

The economy is a human construct. It’s not an act of god. We made it, we can change it.

Notes

1) Darwin’s original title was, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.

2) *Beyond growth: the economics of sustainable development*, Herman Daly, Beacon Press, 1996, p215.

3) ‘Global warming and modern capitalism’, Gustav Speth, *The Nation*, 6 Oct 2008.

4) ‘What every environmentalist needs to know about capitalism’, Fred Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster, *Monthly Review*, March 2010, p8.

5) [The Ecological Wealth of Nations](#)’ (pdf), Global Footprint Network

6) *The upside of down*, Thomas Homer-Dixon, Souvenir Press, London, 2007.

7) *The Spirit Level: why more equal societies almost always do better*, Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, Allen Lane,

London, 2009.

8) Growth isn't possible: why rich nations need a new economic direction, NEF, London, 2010.

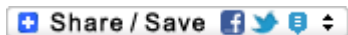
Wayne Ellwood began work with New Internationalist magazine in 1977 as an editor. He set up the NI North American office in Toronto and played several roles in the early years in addition to editing: including fund-raising, marketing and accountancy. He has travelled widely in the Majority World, Europe, the US, Australia/New Zealand and Canada. He has written extensively on globalization in the pages of NI Magazine and is the editor of the reference book, [The A to Z of World Development](#) and the author of [The No Nonsense Guide to Globalization](#).

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John R. MacArthur: Dyer's Convincing Global-Warming Vision

Dyer's Convincing Global-Warming Vision

by John R. MacArthur [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 14 2010 | The Providence Journal (Rhode Island) | CommonDreams

Until very recently, global warming never struck me as the great issue of the day. I avoided Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" because it seemed too much like homework, and when I finally forced myself to watch it at home on DVD, I fell asleep. Then, last November, after e-mails were leaked from England's University of East Anglia that made their scientist authors appear high-handed and disingenuous - which came to be known as "Climategate" - I figured maybe I didn't need to wake up.

Still, the scientific evidence strikes me as largely convincing, and the critics of global-warming projections, like George W. Bush, considerably less so. It's just that, as bad as they sounded, the awful environmental consequences of climate change always seemed less urgent than, say, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, or the growing gap between rich and poor.

However, a new book, "[Climate Wars](#)," by the London-based journalist Gwynne Dyer, has abruptly changed my mind. For if Dyer's warnings are correct, the greatest dangers from global warming are the ones that most concern me in the present: more destructive wars with higher casualties and an even greater widening of the divide between rich and poor, with the former able to buy protection and the latter unable to do so. Certainly, America's Wilsonian military ambitions (in the guise of a "war on terror") need to be reined in; and yes, Wall Street's "free-trade" war against giving decent-paying jobs to the American working class needs to be stopped. But if we don't get the climate under control, any one of Dyer's eight imagined scenarios might well dwarf these more immediate calamities.

I don't know the acceptable concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, now at 390 parts per million and heading up. I'll leave to such scientists as James Hansen whether the target for reduction should be 350 parts per million - to keep the polar ice caps from melting - or if 450 ppm is a realistic aim. And I'm not qualified to respond to such respectable climate-change critics as Alexander Cockburn who exhibit seemingly reasoned skepticism about the human contribution to global warming.

But if even half of what Dyer describes actually happens, we're in for social and economic Darwinism that will make the mindless U.S. military adventures in the Mideast look like humanitarian interventions and Wall Street's larceny look like a social-welfare program.

Consider the most optimistic of Dyer's dystopias, "Scenario Five: A Happy Tale." Looking back from the last quarter of the 21st Century, we learn that in 2013 a storm surge overwhelmed the Nile Delta, leaving 10 million people homeless; that in 2015 a terrible heat wave killed 75,000 Midwestern Americans; and that in 2016 devastating floods occurred in the Yangtze, Mekong, Salween and Brahmaputra river valleys. Happily, these catastrophes provoked a largely rational response from humankind, but there were painful side-effects. Since oil was rapidly replaced by other sources of energy that didn't add CO₂ to the atmosphere, demand for petroleum fell steeply and bloody revolutions ensued in such oil-exporting countries as Nigeria and Iran, where only the rich and connected continued to prosper.

Still, there was good news: When Israel flattened Iran in 2021 in a pre-emptive strike (in the process losing Haifa), nuclear war didn't spread because nobody cared about Mideast oil anymore.

Despite the successful effort to reverse the growth of CO₂ in the atmosphere, however, it was already too late to prevent more ecological disasters. Because so much tropical rainforest had been destroyed; because so much Arctic sea ice had melted; and because higher summer temperatures had melted the permafrost in Siberia and Alaska, leading to huge releases of methane and CO₂, semi-permanent drought had ruined agriculture in Mexico and Central America, killer cyclones repeatedly hit Bangladesh, and low-lying islands had to evacuate their entire populations to escape rising sea levels.

Unlike Al Gore (whose steadfast support of "free trade" has helped drive manufacturing farther from its biggest markets, thus wasting more fuel in shipping), Dyer is not hypocritical: By 2075, he writes somewhat ironically, it could be said that "this generation has done its job" and "saved civilization."

If readers find "A Happy Tale" depressing, I encourage them to delve into Dyer's other scenarios in which "this generation" doesn't do its job. "People always raid before they starve," he notes, but "raiding" doesn't guarantee you'll get food, water, or work. On this point, Americans should pay special attention to Scenario 3: United States, 2029.

In the good old days, at the beginning of the 21st Century, "only a couple of million Mexicans and Central Americans tried to cross into the United States each year, and American agribusiness needed at least half of them to make it through in order to replenish the supply of cheap illegal labor that made the farms profitable." As Dyer explains, this "was all done with a nod and a wink" by Congress colluding with business while making a show of trying to halt the flow. But by 2029, with their crops drying up, tens of millions of Latinos were leaving their land and a million a month were trying to get into the U.S., half of whom were making it through.

With border states' social services overwhelmed, the U.S. public demanded action and immigration control finally got serious. Mines were laid in a moat dug between new border fences, nearly 10 feet high and topped with razor wire and automated machine-guns. There "were very ugly incidents early on when groups of would-be immigrants tried to cross the completed sections of the 'Big Fence' and were practically wiped out by the automated weapons and mines." But the new system worked, and "old-style" illegal entry virtually came to an end.

Sounds preposterous? Not when you observe Arizona's current political climate and not when you learn that India is already building an eight-foot fence along its entire border with Bangladesh to protect itself from a massive influx of refugees from global warming.

Dyer and the scientists he interviews say it's not too late to stave off mass starvation and resource wars. Geo-engineering the atmosphere to reflect more of the sun's heat back into outer space seems to offer some promise. But if we don't reduce population and consumption and don't switch to solar, wind and geo-thermal energy, and if we don't start building pump-storage electrical generators and ban coal-burning plants, "then," as Dyer says, "we really are screwed." I don't think Al Gore could say it any better, or in fewer words.

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John R. MacArthur, publisher of [Harper's Magazine](#). Among other books, he is the author of [Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War](#).

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Climate Wars

Editorial Reviews

From Publishers Weekly

Civil war in China and the collapse of the European Union by 2045; nuclear strikes between India and Pakistan in 2036; people being blown up by land mines and machine-gunned by automatic weapons at a sealed U.S./Mexican border in 2029—these are just some of the terrifying climate change scenarios forecast by journalist and geopolitical analyst Dyer (*The Mess They Made*). His apocalyptic predictions are drawn from unimpeachable sources: climate experts like NASA scientist James Hansen and Angela Merkel's climate change adviser, Dr. Hans-Joachim Schellnhuber of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research; military and political sources including former CIA head James Woolsey. Even Dyer's most optimistic scenario is barely cause for celebration: humanity manages to curb global warming enough to save itself, but only after several million deaths and countless disasters. The multitude of sources and the political perspective on global warming make the book scarier and more convincing than the usual predictions limited to climate and weather. Environmentalists will likely be horrified and even more depressed than they are already, but we can hope that Dyer's sources are impressive enough to convince policy makers to take serious action. (June)

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Review

"Terrifying is just one of the words to leap off the page." --Bookseller

"Gwynne Dyer is one of the few who are both courageous enough to tell the unvarnished truth, and have the background to understand, not misrepresent the inputs. This book does a superb job of detailing the emerging realities of Climate/Energy. These realities are not pretty." --Dennis Bushnell, Chief Scientist at NASA

"This is a truly important and timely book. Gwynne Dyer has made the best and most plausible set of guesses I have yet seen about the human consequences of climate change, of how drought and heat may ignite wars, even nuclear wars, around the globe." --James Lovelock, award-winning scientist, inventor, and originator of the "Gaia" hypothesis

"The current debate on climate change is mostly on its future effects, but few are brave enough to work out what they might be. Here is a lively, alarming and even entertaining attempt to look ahead. Water and war have always been associated. We need hope as well as good sense in looking at the future. Here it is." --Sir Crispin Tickell, former Chairman of both the Board of the Climate Institute of Washington DC and the International Institute for Environment and Development

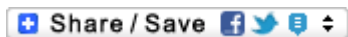
"Anyone still complacent about climate change will find *Climate Wars* instructive and disturbing. These articulate insights into climate geopolitics by Gwynne Dyer are an important tool for understanding why the climate challenge is big, hard, and vital to human survival -- yet soluble if we pay attention now." --Amory B. Lovins, *Time* magazine's Hero of the Environment, author of *Capitalism as if the World Matters*, and Chairman & Chief Scientist, Rocky Mountain Institute

Product Description

Dwindling resources. Massive population shifts. Natural disasters. Spreading epidemics. Drought. Rising sea levels. Plummeting agricultural yields. Crashing economies. Political extremism. These are some of the expected consequences of runaway climate change in the decades ahead, and any of them could tip the world towards conflict. Prescient, unflinching, and based on exhaustive research and interviews, *Climate Wars* promises to be one of the most important books of the coming years.

About the Author

Gwynne Dyer has worked as a freelance journalist, columnist, author, broadcaster, and lecturer on international affairs for more than 20 years. Dyer has served in the Canadian, British, and American navies. He holds a PhD in war studies from the University of London, has taught at Sandhurst, and has served on the Board of Governors of Canada's Royal Military College. His twice-weekly column on international affairs is published by 175 newspapers in 45 countries, and is translated into more than a dozen languages. He is the author of several books, including *War, Future: Tense, and The Mess They Made*. --This text refers to the [Paperback edition](#).



Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:53 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, July 13, 2010

[Tom Turnipseed: Killing For Fun; Military Madness](#)

Killing For Fun; Military Madness

by Tom Turnipseed [article link](#)

July 13 2010 | CommonDreams

Successful professionals enjoy their work. The Obama administration has picked a successful and happy warrior in Marine Corps Gen. James N. Mattis to head the US Central Command. The command includes all US forces in Afghanistan, Iraq, the entire Middle East and Central Asia. Mattis has gloated that it is "fun to shoot some people" and "have a plan to kill everybody you meet".

Killing is the key to success in military actions. Killing enough insurgents by invading and occupying US forces enables the winners to subdue and subjugate the survivors. The real winners in the Middle East are the US based corporations who seek to exploit the resources of energy and mineral rich countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran. Also the corporate war profiteers of the defense industry are making out like bandits. They furnish the killing tools, the hired mercenaries and other wasteful and expensive materials, equipment and supplies for our never-ending wars-on-terror.

Mattis has a strong resume in the military killing business. He was a lieutenant colonel in the US invasion of Iraq in 1991, directed the Marines in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, headed the US assault on the Iraqi city of Fallujah in 2004 and helped design the siege that destroyed the city and killed thousands of Iraqi civilians. Mattis also commanded the initial troops that went into Afghanistan in 2001.

Describing his feelings about the people in Afghanistan, General Mattis said, "... It's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them. Actually it's quite fun to fight them, you know. It's a hell of a hoot. It's fun to shoot some people. I'll be right up there with you. I like brawling."

Author Thomas Ricks wrote that Mattis told his troops to, "Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet."

During Operation Desert Storm in Iraq, Mattis reportedly told his troops, "It's the mission of every Marine in the battalion to send one dead Iraqi home to Mama."

Perhaps World War II Army General George S. Patton, Jr. is a role model for Mattis in his glorification of military madness and the joy of killing. Patton said "Magnificent! Compared to war all other forms of human endeavor shrink to insignificance. God help me, I do love it so!", and "No bastard ever won a war by dying for his country, He won it by making the other poor dumb bastard die for his country." Patton also said, "America loves a winner, and will not tolerate a loser, this is why America has never, and will never, lose a war." Of course that was before our ill-fated military ventures in Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates called Mattis "one of our military's outstanding combat leaders and strategic thinkers, bringing an essential mix of experience, judgment and perspective to this important post." Asked about Mattis's bloodthirsty rhetoric, Gates brushed off an official rebuke against Mattis saying it was five years ago.

In Afghanistan, US and NATO forces casualties continue to escalate. The number of Americans killed so far this month is at least 23 with 14 killed last week. In June, 102 occupation troops were killed including 60 Americans. 1,149 American soldiers have been killed in the war in Afghanistan, and countless numbers of Afghan civilians have died. We don't do body counts of "the enemy" because, as former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said, "death has a tendency to encourage a depressing view of war."

Our economic crisis is directly tied to the cost of the war. It costs \$1 million per year to maintain a single soldier in Afghanistan. The 2010 Pentagon budget is \$693 billion, which surpasses all other discretionary spending programs combined--while our deficit soars. We desperately need money to create green jobs, rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and improve education.

President Obama replaced General McChrystal with General Petraeus as commanding general of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. McChrystal had made derogatory remarks about Obama and his administration's conduct of the war. Petraeus was head of the Central Command and will be replaced by Mattis. Obama said, "War is bigger than any one man or woman, whether a private, a general or president."

The war in Afghanistan is a big loser. Rearranging deck chairs to include one more "fun to kill" military madman will not keep it from sinking like the Titanic. Only ending the war will save Obama.

A recent *ABC/Washington Post* poll found that people felt the war was not worth fighting by a 53 to 44 margin. An *NBC/Wall Street Journal* poll had 62% of the American people saying the country was going in the wrong direction and Obama's approval rating at 45% with 48% disapproval.

President Obama was the most successful politician in the US who seemed to enjoy being elected to the highest office in the land. Fulfilling his promise of peace, hope and change is a winner. However his failure to conclude killing for fun military madness will make him a loser in 2012 and doom his party in November.

Tom Turnipseed is an attorney, writer and peace activist in Columbia, SC. For his blog click [here](#).

Why Are We in Afghanistan?

As Petraeus Takes Over, Could Success Be Worse Than Failure?

by Tom Engelhardt [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 12, 2011 | TomDispatch | CommonDreams

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Scary Anti-Iran Talk Is Escalating -- And Weapons May Be Moving Into Position for Attack

Though Iran does not have nuclear capability, the U.S. and Israel are espousing a doctrine of "pre-emption."

By Conn Hallinan [article link](#)

July 12 2010 | Foreign Policy in Focus | AlterNet

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Butler Shaffer: A Modest Solution

A Modest Solution

by Butler Shaffer [article link](#)

July 13, 2010 | LewRockwell

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."

~ Albert Einstein

Governments in America – at both the state and federal level – are in an escalating state of bankruptcy. Politicians, media hacks, and academicians propose the kinds of responses reminiscent of the classic definition of insanity: to keep repeating the same actions expecting a different result. Increase income taxes, cut spending, enact a federal sales tax, tax "junk food" and tanning salons, are just a few of the suggestions being made by those intent on recycling political solutions to politically-generated problems.

At the center of all this is a national debt that has arisen from a basic truth that statisticians prefer to ignore: human beings are much less thrifty in spending other people's money than they are with their own. Let me control your checkbook, and I will come up with a much different pattern of expenditures than you would have. We are much more generous with the lives and property of others, a state of mind upon which political systems depend for their existence.

We need to step outside the circle of our conditioned thinking and consider alternatives to our dilemmas. I have a modest proposal to offer to resolve the national debt: repudiate it! The reality is that, even after more extended wars and the formalization of slave-state efforts to avoid it, defaulting on this debt will become the ultimate solution. Leviathan, and its institutional keepers, will not curb its appetites, particularly when all that stands in its way are the always-expendable people.

I find support for my proposal in the thinking of the Keynesians, whose ideas most of us accepted, helping to produce our current state of affairs. My undergraduate introduction to the study of economics was firmly rooted in Keynesianism, whose tenets expressed what I assumed Thomas Carlyle meant in regarding this field of study as the "dismal science." One of the frequently stated defenses of government debt was "we only owe it to ourselves." It was only years later that I was to discover who the "ourselves" were to whom we were indebted. Such creditors proved to be the same gang who comprised "we, the people" in the creation of government in our country: the institutional interests who comprise the ruling political establishment.

If the idea that we "only owe [the debt] to ourselves" was sufficient to help generate popular acceptance of Keynesian doctrines, should not the *repudiation* of this debt be seen as a reasonable solution? After all, if I "owe" myself \$100, would it make sense for me to contrive all kinds of mechanisms and schedules for repaying it? It is comparable to the kind of nonsense thinking one sees in advertising: "you owe it to yourself to" purchase a retailer's product or services. If I failed to make this purchase, would I have a cause of action against myself grounded in negligence or breach of contract? Could I go to court and get a judgment against myself for my misfeasance? The proposition is so absurd that it could only be taken seriously in a law school!

To suggest that the national debt be repudiated will strike politically-conditioned minds as irresponsible. "Responsibility" is a word which, when divorced from individual conduct and the concept of property, can become little more than a duty one has to satisfy obligations others have created for him or her. By contrast, I am responsible for the consequences of my actions, or from what my property has done to another, *because* – and only because – as a self-owning person I am in control of my energies and other resources. Political action, on the other hand, is the very essence of irresponsible behavior, for it allows those who desire a particular end to shift the costs of providing it to those who do not want it.

The myth of "representative government" is invoked, at this point, to inform us that politicians and other state officials are our "agents"; that we – you and I – are the "principals" in this arrangement who are responsible for what our "agents" do in our behalf. Thus, if we have directed our agents to run up enormous debts, we are obliged to satisfy such liabilities. I trust

that such delusional thinking – grounded as it is on the "social contract" theory of the state – will not require much refutation here. But in case a reader has not thought this through, let me observe that – apart from a few isolated examples of voluntarily constituted communal societies – I am unaware of *any* political system that has arisen by way of a consensus [i.e., universal agreement] among those to be collectively bound. Governments – including the American varieties – have arisen through and been maintained by conquest; by violent force. The idea that one who has not sanctioned the state that insists upon controlling him can be considered a "principal" who is vicariously responsible for the acts of his phantom "agents," is nothing more than the imposition of duties upon those who have not undertaken them. Along with the myth of "democracy" – which I have defined as the illusion that my wife and I, combined, have twice the political influence of David Rockefeller – such ideas are part of the corruption of thought upon which state systems depend.

Even the politicians who have been voted into office cannot reasonably claim to be the agents of anyone. Voting takes place anonymously, in the privacy of a polling booth, with no public expression of one's choices. Unlike the sales representative of the United Updike Company – who has been provided, by his employer, with an office, business cards, telephone, and other indicia of his status as an agent – politicians are unable to clearly identify *anyone* for whom he or she acts. Furthermore, those who do not vote – such as myself – could never be accused of selecting any politician as his or her elected agent. The man who claims to represent the congressional district in which I live almost always votes contrary to my personal values: in what twisted way could he be said to be *my* representative in Washington?

The following example might serve as an effective means of getting the state to formally acknowledge that it is not the agent of any ordinary people. One might identify a given candidate – perhaps for the House of Representatives – and send them a certified letter [for evidentiary purposes] telling that person as follows: "I intend to vote for you, in the general election, to be my duly selected representative in Congress. If you are elected, I hereby direct you to never vote for any measure that would, whether directly or indirectly, increase my tax obligations." Should that person be elected, a follow-up letter should at once be written stating: "Congratulations on your being elected as my representative to Congress. I voted for you in yesterday's election. You will recall my letter of [previous date] in which I directed you, as my agent, to never vote for any bill that would increase my tax obligations." After taking his or her seat in Congress, should the representative vote in favor of any such tax-increasing measure, the alleged "principal" would immediately file an action against the so-called "agent" for breach of contract. The courts would then have to confront the issue of whether an elected official is or is not such an "agent" of those who so select them. I suspect the judiciary would hold that such officials are not the agents of *anyone other than themselves*.

The fallacy of the state as an agent further unravels in the face of the routine practice of government officials keeping their actions *secret* from their alleged principals. In what marketplace setting would an employer be legally prohibited from knowing the details of its employee's course of employment conduct? The most recent example of this practice was seen in the House of Representatives voting down a measure that would have provided for an audit of the Federal Reserve policies and practices. By a 229-198 margin, Republican and Democrat agency pretenders decided that it was not the business of their alleged "principals" to be privy to the knowledge these elected officials share with one another.

In the face of an indebtedness generated by those who make a pretense of representing us – even though we might not have so chosen them; who keep secret the purposes and interests of the *real* beneficiaries of their actions; who stand by, without objection, as trillions of dollars are shoveled from the Treasury into the coffers of the corporate owners of the political system; with what principled and reasoned intelligence can it be said that we – you and I – are *responsible* for the ensuing disaster, and have an *obligation* to restore solvency to the system?

There is no better time than the present for *Boobus Americanus* to finally get around to do what he has long resisted doing: questioning the nature of the state. While the Constitution and those who officiate on behalf of the state speak to the promotion of the "general welfare" as the underlying purpose of the arrangement, the reality is that *all* political systems – in whatever time or region of the world – exist for the sole purpose of benefiting a few at the expense of the many. Our liberty, our wealth, even our very lives, are at the disposal of self-anointed masters who have conditioned us to believe in the legitimacy of their rule. As the system intensifies threats of its violence against us to keep us in a line that can lead only to our individual and collective bankruptcy, intelligent minds would do well to ask the *whyness* of our supposed obligations.

We might begin by identifying the real parties in interest in all of this. Such an inquiry would be yet another invocation of the "cui bono?" question: *who has benefited from the destructive mess that has been created?* How should moral and causal responsibility be allocated in defining who should bear the costs? If my neighbor loses his job and later goes bankrupt, should I be considered "responsible" for his losses, as well as obligated to his creditors?

This is but a revisitation of an earlier financial "crisis" that American taxpayers were called upon to resolve. In the early 1970s, New York City was unable to meet its obligations to bondholders who had underwritten various governmental projects – including the construction of the World Trade Center. The corporations and others whose special interests had been served by such endeavors, were not receiving their promised bond payments. The politicians and the mainstream media were quick to the rescue. You may recall the "financial crisis" that had hit New York City, represented as some vague "threat" to all residents of Gotham.

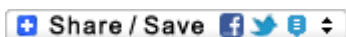
I recall the anguish of a fellow faculty member at a university where I was teaching at the time. He literally cried – real tears – at the prospects facing New York City, as he begged our support for a rescue from Congress. "My wife and I (sob!) spent our honeymoon in (sob!) New York, and the thought that Central Park (sob!) and the theaters (sob!) should disappear is (sob!) too painful to bear." "Where do you think all of this is going?", I asked. "Do you think Middle-Eastern bankers are going to attach a rope to Manhattan and pull it to Saudi Arabia?" He just gave me the same kind of empty stare we are likely to see on the face of *Boobus*, as he embraces his "responsibility" for seeing to it that the current gang of special interests receive their promised spoils.

The political establishment and its media toadies will condemn any sentiment that suggests that you and I approach the solution to the national debt crisis with the same self-interest motivation that led the institutional order to create it. We will once again be admonished to put aside our "selfishness" for the "greater good," an appeal that will bring us face-to-face with Stendhal's observation that "the shepherd always tries to persuade the sheep that their interests and his own are the same."

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Monday, July 12, 2010

[Joe Bageant: Our Plunder of Nature Will End Up Killing Capitalism and Our Obscene Lifestyles](#)

Our Plunder of Nature Will End Up Killing Capitalism and Our Obscene Lifestyles

Waltzing at the Doomsday Ball

Capitalism is dead, but we still dance with the corpse

By Joe Bageant [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 11, 2010 | JoeBageant | AlterNet

As an Anglo European white guy from a very long line of white guys, I want to thank all the brown, black, yellow and red people for a marvelous three-century joy ride. During the past 300 years of the industrial age, as Europeans, and later as Americans, we have managed to consume infinitely more than we ever produced, thanks to colonialism, crooked deals with despotic potentates and good old gunboats and grapeshot. Yes, we have lived, and still live, extravagant lifestyles far above

the rest of you. And so, my sincere thanks to all of you folks around the world working in sweatshops, or living on two bucks a day, even though you sit on vast oil deposits. And to those outside my window here in Mexico this morning, the two guys pruning the retired gringo's hedges with what look like pocket knives, I say, keep up the good work. It's the world's cheap labor guys like you -- the black, brown and yellow folks who take it up the shorts -- who make capitalism look like it actually works. So keep on humping. Remember: We've got predator drones.

After twelve generations of lavish living at the expense of the rest of the world, it is understandable that citizens of the so-called developed countries have come to consider it quite normal. In fact, Americans expect it to become plusher in the future, increasingly chocked with techno gadgetry, whiz bang processed foodstuffs, automobiles, entertainments, inordinately large living spaces -- forever.

We've had plenty of encouragement, especially in recent times. Before our hyper monetized economy metastasized, things such as housing values went through the sky, and the cost of basics, food etc. went through the basement floor, compared to the rest of the world. The game got so cheap and fast that relative fundamental value went right out the window and hasn't been seen since. For example, it would be very difficult to make Americans understand that a loaf of bread or a dozen eggs have more inherent value than an iPhone. Yet, at ground zero of human species economics, where the only currency is the calorie, that is still true.

Such is the triumph of the money economy that nothing can be valued by any other measure, despite that nobody knows what money is worth at all these days. This is due in part to the international finance jerk-off, in which the world's governments print truckloads of worthless money, so they can loan it out. The idea here is that incoming repayment in some other, more valuable, currency will cover their own bad paper. In turn, the debtor nations print their own bogus money to repay the loans. So you have institutions loaning money they do not have to institutions unable to repay the loans. All this is based on the bullshit theory that tangible wealth is being created by the world's financial institutions, through interest on the debt. Money making money.

As my friend, physicist and political activist George Salzman writes,

"Everyone in these 'professional' institutions dealing in money lives a fundamentally dishonest life. Never mind 'regulating' interest rates," he says. "We must do away with interest, with the very idea of 'money making money'. We must recognize that what is termed 'Western Civilization' is in fact an anti-civilization, a global social structure of death and destruction. However, the charade of ever-increasing debt can be kept up only as long as the public remains ignorant. Once ecological limits have been reached the capitalist political game is up."

You can see why I love this guy.

Boomers and Doomers and XXL bloomers

Capitalism wouldn't be around today, at least not in its current pathogenic form, if it had not caught a couple of lucky breaks. The first of course, was the expansion of bloodsucking colonialism to give it transfusions of unearned wealth, enabling "investors" to profit by artificial means (death, oppression and slavery). But the biggest break was being driven to stratospheric heights by inordinate quantities of available hydrocarbon energy. Inordinate, but never the less finite. Consequently, the 100-year-long oil suckdown that put industrial countries in the tall cotton, now threatens to take back from subsequent beneficiary generation everything it gave. The Hummers, the golf courses, the big box stores, cruising at 35,000 feet over the Atlantic -- everything.

You'd never know that, to look around at Americans or Canadians, who have not the slightest qualms about living in that 3,500 square foot vinyl sided fuck box, if they can manage to make the mortgage nut, or unashamedly buying a quadruple X large Raiders Jersey because, hey, a guy's gotta eat, right? Why don't I deserve a nice ride, a swimming pool and a flat screen? I worked for it (sure you did buddy, your \$12,000 Visa/MasterCard tab is proof of that).

The doomers and the peak oilers gag, and they call it American denial. Personally, I think it is somewhat unfair to say that most Americans and Canadians are in denial. They simply don't have a fucking clue about what is really happening to them

and their world. Everything they have been taught about working, money and "quality of life" constitutes the planet's greatest problem -- overshoot. Understanding this trashes our most basic assumptions, and requires a complete reversal in contemporary thought and practice about how we live in the world. When was the last time you saw any individual, much less an entire nation, do that?

Compounding our ignorance and naiveté are the officials and experts, politicians, media elites, and especially economists, who interpret the world for us and govern the course of things. The go-to guys. They don't know either. But they've got the lingo down.

Somehow or other, it all has to do with the economy, which none of us understands, despite round the clock media jabbering on the subject. Somehow it has to do with this great big spring on Wall Street called "the market" that's gotta be kept wound up, and interest rates at something called The Fed, which have got to be kept smunched down. The industry of crystal gazing and hairball rubbing surrounding these entities is called economics.

In heaven, there are no jobs

The following may be old news to some who studied economics in college. However, I did not. And, for me at least, this gets at the heart of our dilemma (if dilemma is the right word for economic, environmental and species collapse). Here goes:

The human economy is made up of three parts: nature, work and money. But since nobody would pay people like Allen Greenspan or Milton Friedman millions of dollars if they talked just like the rest of us, economists and academics refer to these three parts as the primary, secondary and tertiary economies.

Of these, nature -- the world's ecosystems and natural capital -- is by far the most important. It comprises about three quarters of the total value of economic activity (Richard Costanza et al. 1997). To western world economists, nature -- when it is even give nature a thought -- is considered to be limitless.

The second part, work, is the labor required to produce goods and services from natural resources. Work creates real value through efficient use of both human and natural resource energy. A potato is just a potato until people sweating over belt lines and giant fryers turn it into Tater Tots.

The third economy, the tertiary economy, is the production and exchange of money. This includes anything that can be exchanged for money, whether it is gold, or mortgages bundled as securities, or derivatives. In short, any paperwork device that can be rigged up in such a fashion that money will stick to it. Feel free to take a wild-assed guess which of the three economies causes the most grief in this world.

To an economist, work -- the stuff that eats up at least a third of our earthly lives, is merely a "factor" called labor. Work is considered an unfortunate cost in creating added value. Added value, along with nature's resources, is the basis for all real world profits. Without labor, the money economy could not gin up on-paper wealth in its virtual economy. Somewhere, somebody's gotta do some real-world work, before bankers and investment brokers can go into their offices and pretend to work at "creating and managing wealth."

Paying the workers in society to produce real wealth costs money. Capitalists hate any sort of cost. It represents money that has somehow escaped their coffers. So when any behemoth corporation hands out thousands of pink slips on a Friday, Wall Street cheers and "the market" goes up. No ordinary mortal has ever seen "the market." But traders on the floor of 11 Wall Street, people who've deemed themselves more than mortal by virtue of their \$110 Vanitas silk undershorts, assure us the market does exist. No tours of the New York Stock exchange are permitted, so we have to take their word for it.

In any case, in the money economy, eliminating costs, even if those costs happen to be feeding human beings, citizens of the empire, is sublime. That is why economists in the tertiary economy can declare a "jobless recovery" with a straight face. By their lights, the perfect recovery would necessarily be 100% jobless. Human costs of generating profit would be entirely eliminated.

Say what you will about the tertiary "money economy," but one thing is certain. It's virulent. Right now finance makes up 42% of GDP, and is rising. Traditionally that figure has been around 9%. Fifty eight percent of the economy is "services." When it comes to the service economy, most people think of fried chicken buckets and "customer service," call centers harassing debtors or selling credit cards. However, much of the so-called service economy consists of "services" sub-corporations and entities owned and operated by monopolies in communications, electronic access and energy. They are designed for the sole purpose of robbing the people incrementally. Borrow a microscope and read the back side your cable and electric bill. Billing you is a "service" for which you pay. So is the guy who cuts off your lights if you don't.

And manufacturing? Ten percent. Mostly big ticket items such as salad shooters, as near as I can tell.

What nature?

Still though, the foundation of the world, including our entire economic structure, is nature. This is clear to anyone who has ever, planted a garden, hiked in the woods, gone fishing or been gnawed on by chiggers. *In vis est exordium quod terminus.*

Yet, not one in a thousand economists takes nature into account. Nature has no place in contemporary economics, or the economic policy of today's industrial nations. Again, like the general American public, these economists are not in denial. They simply don't know it's there. Historically, nature has never been considered even momentarily because economists, like the public, never figured they would run out of it. With the Gulf oil "spill" at full throttle, the terrible destruction of nature is becoming obvious. But no economist who values his or her career wants to start figuring the cost of ecocide into pricing analysis. For god sake man, it's a cost!

With industrial society chewing the ass out of Mama Nature for three centuries, something had to give, and it has. Capitalists, however, remain unimpressed by global warming, or melting polar ice caps, or Southwestern desert armadillos showing up in Canada, or hurricanes getting bigger and more numerous every year. They are impressed by the potential dough in the so-called green economy. In fact, last night I watched an economist on CNN say that if the government had let the free market take care of the BP gulf catastrophe, it would not be the clusterfuck it is now. Now THAT might qualify as denial. In the mean time, anthropogenic ecocide and resource depletion, coupled with the pressures of six billion mouths and asses across the globe, have started to produce -- surprise surprise, Sheriff Taylor! -- very real effects on world economies. (How could they not?) So far though, in the simplistic see-spot-run American mind, it's all about dead pelicans and oiled up hotel beaches.

Monkey with the paper

When the U.S., and then the world's money economy started to crumble, the first thing capitalist economists could think of to do was to monkey with the paper. That's all they knew how to do. It was unthinkable that the tertiary virtual economy, that great backroom fraud of debt manipulation and fiat money, might have finally reached the limits of the material earth to support. That the money economy's gaming of workers and Mother Nature might itself be the problem never occurred to the world's economic movers and shakers. It still hasn't. (Except for Chavez, Morales, Castro and Lula). Jobs disappeared, homes went to foreclosure, and personal debt was at staggering all time highs. America's working folks were taking it square in the face. Not that economists or financial kingpins cared much one way or the other. In the capitalist financial world, everything is an opportunity. Cancer? Build cancer hospital chains. Pollution? Sell pollution credits. The country gone bankrupt?

"Nothing to do," cried the mad hatters of finance, "but print more money, and give gobs of cash to the banks! Yes, yes, yes! Borrow astronomical amounts of the stuff and bribe every fat cat financial corporation up and down The Street!" All of which came down to creating more debt for the common people to work off. They seem willing enough to do it too -- if only they had jobs.

Along with the EU, Japan and the rest of the industrial world, the US continues to flood the market with cheap credit. That would be hunky dory, if it was actually wealth for anybody but a banker. The real problems are debt and fraud, and tripling the debt in order to cover up the fraud. And pretending there no natural costs of our actions, that we do not have to rob the natural world to crank up the money world through debt.

No matter what economists tell us about getting the credit industry moving again, papering over debt with more debt will not pollinate our food crops when the last honeybee is dead. I suggest that we put the economists out there in the fields, hand-pollinating crops like they do in China. They seem to know all about the subject, and have placed a monetary value of \$12 billion on the pollination accomplished by bees in the US. Can you imagine the fucking arrogance? All bees do is make our fruit and vegetable supply possible. Anyway, if we cannot use the economists for pollinators (odds are they are too damned whacked to do that job), we could also stuff them down the blowhole of the Deepwater Horizon spill. For the first time in history, economists would be visibly useful.

Speaking of China: Since there is no way to pick up the turd of American capitalism by the clean end, much less polish it, American economists have pointed east, and set up a yow-yow about China as "the emerging giant." The "next global industrial superpower." Many Chinese are willing to ride their bicycles 10 miles to work through poisonous yellow-green air, and others in the "emerging middle class" are willing to wade into debt up to their nipples; this is offered as evidence of the viability of industrial capitalism. All it proves is that governments and economists never learn. In the quest of getting something for nothing, China follows the previous fools right into the smog and off the cliff.

Sumthin' fer nuthin'

The main feature of capitalism is the seductive assertion that you can get something for nothing in this world. That you can manufacture wealth through money manipulation, and that it is OK to steal and hold captive the people's medium of exchange, then charge them out the ass for access. That you can do so with a clear conscience. Which you can, if you are the kind of sleazy prick who has inherited or stolen enough wealth to get into the game.

Even so, to keep a rigged game going, you must keep the suckers believing they can, and eventually will, benefit from the game. Also, that it is the only game in town. Legitimizing public theft means indoctrinating the public with all sorts of market mystique and hocus-pocus. They must be convinced there is such a thing as an "investment" for the average schmuck drawing a paycheck (and there is, sort of, between the crashes and the bubbles). It requires a unified economic rationale for government and industry policies, and it is the economist's job to pump out this rationale. Historically, they have seldom hesitated to get down on their knees and do so.

It ain't robbery, it's a business cycle

Capitalism is about one thing: aggregating the surplus productive value of the public for private interests. As we have said, it is about creating state sanctioned "investments" for the workers who produce the real wealth. Things like home "ownership" and mortgages, or stock investments and funds to absorb their retirement savings. That crushing 30-year mortgage with two refis is an investment. So is that 401K melting like a snow cone the beach.

As the people's wealth accumulates, it is steadily siphoned off by government and elite private forces. From time to time, it is openly plundered for their benefit by way of various bubbles, depressions or recessions and other forms of theft passed off as unavoidable acts of nature/god. These periodic raids and draw downs of the people's wealth are attributed to "business cycles." Past periodic raids and thefts are heralded as being proof of the rationale. "See folks, it comes and goes, so it's a cycle!" Economic raids and busts become "market adjustments." Public blackmail and plundering through bailouts become a "necessary rescue packages." Giveaways to corporations under the guise of public works and creating employment become "stimulus." The chief responsibility of economists is to name things in accordance with government and corporate interests. The function of the public is to acquire debt and maintain "consumer confidence." When the public staggers to its feet again and manages to carry more debt, buy more poker chips on credit to play again, it's called a recovery. They are back in the game.

Dealer, hit me with two more cards,. I feel lucky.

Does it hurt yet?

To anyone who is paying attention, things look doomed. Fortunately for American capitalism, nobody is paying attention. They never have. Even given the unemployment numbers, foreclosures and bankruptcies, most Americans are still not

feeling enough pain yet to demand change. Not that they will. Demand change, I mean. We haven't the slightest idea of any other options, outside those provided by the corporate managed state. So in a chorus well-schooled by the media the public demands "reform," of the present system, the systemic pathogenic system based on exploitation of the many by the few, the one presently eating our society from the inside out. How do you reform that?

We are clueless, and the state sees to it that we stay that way. Take the price of gas, about which Americans are obsessive. In one way or another, petroleum is the subject of much news coverage, nearly as much as pissing matches between egomaniacs in Hollywood or on Capitol Hill. So one might think that by now Americans would have a realistic grasp of the petroleum business and things like oil and gasoline prices.

Hah, think again! This is America, this is Strawberry Fields, where nothing is real and the skies are not cloudy all day. We're stewed in a consumer hallucination called the American Dream and riding a digital virtual money economy nobody can even prove exists.

Is there an economy out there or not?

If we decide to believe the money economy still exists, and that debt is indeed wealth, then we damned sure know where to go looking for the wealth. Globally, forty percent of it is in the paws of the wealthiest one percent. Nearly all of that one percent are connected to the largest and richest corporations. Just before the economy blew out, these elites held slightly less than \$80 trillion. After the blowout/bailout, their combined investment wealth was estimated at a little over \$83 trillion. To give some idea, this is four years of the gross output of all the human beings on earth. It is only logical that these elites say the only way to revive the economy, which to them consists entirely of the money economy, is to continue to borrow money from them.

However, the unasked question still hangs in the air: Does the money economy even exist anymore? Is it still there? (was it ever?) Or are we all blindly going through the motions because:

A: we do not understand that, for all practical historical purposes, it's over;

B: we do not know how to do anything else so we keep dancing with the corpse of the hyper-capitalist economy;

C: the right calamity has not come down the pike to knock us loose from the spell of the dance,

or D: we're so friggin brain dead, commodities engorged and internally colonized by capitalist industrialism that nobody cares, and therefore it no longer matters.

This is multiple choice, and it counts ten points toward survival, come the collapse.

If there is no economy left, what the hell are we all participating in? A mirage? The zombie ball? The short answer is: Because the economy is a belief system, you are participating in whatever you believe you are. Personally, I believe we are participating in a modern extension of the feudal system, with bankers as the new feudal barons and credit demographics as their turf. But then, I drink and take drugs. Whatever it is, the money economy is the only game in town until the collapse, after which chickens and firewood may become the national currency. The Masai use cattle don't they?

At the same time, even dumb people are starting to feel an undefined fear in their bones. When I was back in the States last month, an old high school chum, a sluggard who seldom has forward thought beyond the next beer and Lotto scratch ticket, confides in me:

"Joey, I can't shake the feeling that something big and awful is going to happen. And by awful I mean awful."

"Happen to what?"

"Money, work, our country. Shit, I dunno."

"Probably all three," I opined. "Plus the environment."

"Cheerful fuck, ain't ya?"

"That's what they pay me for, Bubba."

Some in the herd are starting to feel a big chill in the air, the first winds of the approaching storm. Yes, something is happening, and you don't know what it is, doooooo yew, Mistah Jones?

However, the most adept economists and other court sorcerers are going along as if nothing too unusual is happening -- calling it a recession, or more recently a double-dip recession (don't you love these turd-balls, making it sound as harmless as an ice cream cone -- gimme a double dip please!) or even a depression. But no matter what it is, they smugly assure us, there is nothing happening that the world has never seen before. Including the insider scams that ignited the catastrophe. It's just a matter of size. Extent.

OK, it's a matter of scale. Like the Gulf oil spill. We've seen spills before, just not this big. But over the next couple of years as the poison crud circulates the world's oceans, the Deep Horizon spill will prove to be a global game changer, whether economists and court wizards acknowledge it or don't. Anything of global scale, whether it is in finance, energy, foreign aid, world health or war contracting, is accompanied by unimaginable complexity. That makes it perfect cover for criminal activity. Particularly finance, where you are always close to the money.

Jim Kunstler, never at a loss to describe a ludicrous situation, sums up the paper economy's engineering of our collapse nicely:

"Wall Street -- in particular the biggest 'banks' -- packaged up and sold enough swindles to unwind 2500 years of western civilization. You simply cannot imagine the amount of bad financial paper out there right now in every vault and portfolio on the planet ... the people fabricating things like synthetic collateralized debt obligations (CDOs) had no idea what the fuck they were doing -- besides deliberately creating documents that nobody would ever understand, that would never be unraveled by teams of law clerks ... and were guaranteed to place in jeopardy every operation of the world economy above the barter level."

Phew!

So, for \$5,000 and an all expense paid trip to Rio: What does a good capitalist do after having stolen all there is to steal from the living, then stolen the nation's future wealth from the unborn through debt both public and private?

Tick tock, tick tock. The wheel spins.

Blaaaaaamp!

"Your answer please."

"A good capitalist would 'invest' his haul in some other racket, some other scam in the money economy."

"Vanna, a pie in the kisser for this guy, please."

The problem with the answer is that economy is now toxed out. Radioactive. Crawling with paper vermin and all manner of vermin, especially toxic derivatives -- about \$1.4 quadrillion worth (even as we are still trying to get used to hearing the term trillions), according to the Bank of National Settlements. That is 1,000 trillion, or \$190,000 for every human being on the planet. There is not now, and never will be, enough wealth to cover that puppy -- because there is not enough natural world under the puppy to create it. Not the way capitalism creates wealth.

Defenders of capitalism who say it can and must be saved must also admit that there is not enough money left to work with, to invest. There is only debt. Oh, yeah, we forgot; debt is wealth to a banker. Well then, all we gotta do is collect \$190,000 per head from people in Sudan and Haiti and the rest of the planet.

Naw, that's too hard. Elite capital's best bet is a good old fashioned money raid on the serfs; create another bubble that will buy enough time before it pops to make the already rich a few billion richer. To that end, the G-8 is blowing one last boulder out there in the hyperspace where the economy is alleged to be surviving. Naturally, they are doing it in order to "save the world economy." The tough part is figuring out what to base the next bubble on.

May I suggest Soylent Green?

Under God, with fees and compound interest for all

From the outset, capitalism was always about the theft of the people's sustenance. It was bound to lead to the ultimate theft -- the final looting of the source of their sustenance -- nature. Now that capitalism has eaten its own seed corn, the show is just about over, with the nastiest scenes yet to play out around water, carbon energy (or anything that expends energy), soil and oxygen. For the near future however, it will continue to play out around money.

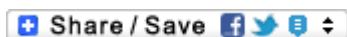
As the economy slowly implodes, money will become more volatile stuff than it already is. The value and availability of money is sure to fluctuate wildly. Most people don't have the luxury of escaping the money economy, so they will be held hostage and milked hard again by the same people who just drained them in the bailouts. As usual, the government will be right there to see that everybody plays by the rules. Those who have always benefited by capitalism's rules will benefit more. That cadre of "money professionals" which holds captive the nation's money supply, and runs things according to the rules of money, can never lose money. It writes the rules. And rewrites them when it suits the money elite's interests. Capitalism, the Christian god, democracy, the Constitution.

It's all one ball of wax, one set of rules in the American national psyche. Thus, the money masters behind the curtain will write The New Rules, the new tablets of supreme law, and call them Reform. There will be rejoicing that "the will of the people" has once again moved upon the land, and that the democracy's scripture has once again been delivered by the unseen hand of God.

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Joe Bageant is author of the book, [Deer Hunting With Jesus: Dispatches from America's Class War](#) (Random House Crown), about working class America. A complete archive of his on-line work, along with the thoughts of many working Americans on the subject of class may be found on his [website](#).

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Monday, July 12, 2010

Les Leopold: Why the Idiocy About Unemployment?

Why the Idiocy About Unemployment?

by Les Leopold [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 9, 2010 | Huffington Post | CommonDreams

My wife, a labor economist, is upset with NPR's "The Take Away" (and many other news programs) for reinforcing the myth that somehow the unemployed are to blame for not having a job. We all should be angry as well because the jobs just aren't there. In fact, the latest unemployment statistics show that there are five unemployed workers available for every vacant job. Why blame workers when it's so clear that Wall Street's reckless gambling caused the jobs crisis?

By now, you'd think we'd have buried this issue. But like Dracula it refuses to die. And so, I return to the subject with the hope of driving a stake through its heart and giving it a proper burial. **Among the claims we need to put to rest:**

1. Extended unemployment benefits are causing unemployment. *Extending benefits for the long-term unemployed will only encourage them to sit at home on their extended derrieres and let vacant jobs go begging.*

What jobs? We're down 8 million since the start of the Great Recession. We aren't even creating enough new jobs to keep up with population growth. So what jobs are the unemployed not taking?

Every child knows how to play musical chairs. When you take away 8 million chairs, a lot of people are forced to scrounge around looking for seats that aren't there. Providing nourishment for the chairless is not the cause of the disappearing chairs. It's just the decent thing to do.

Why is this so difficult to grasp? And why are so many people angry at the long-term unemployed and not at the bankers who actually created this mess?

Economist [Dean Baker](#) suggests that the Republicans are trying to keep unemployment as high as possible right now because they think that high jobless numbers will spell disaster for the Democrats in November. And if we give the unemployed extended benefits, that money will act as a stimulus, generating more jobs. Well, we can't have that! It's better for the Republicans if the economy stays in the ditch.

But what about Obama and the Democrats? Why aren't they at the barricades, fighting for the unemployed? They could be flooding the talk shows with a raucous defense of the jobless. They could be putting ads up all over the country, explaining why the long-term unemployed deserve our support. They ought to be ridiculing any politician or pundit who argues against jobless benefits. Where the hell is their outrage?

Instead, even as the unemployment crisis continues, the Democrats are pushing austerity and deficit reduction--the financial industry's pet issue. If the Democrats are so worried about unemployment benefits deepening the deficit they should start plugging that money hole by raising taxes on billionaire hedge funds executives. Just ask the billionaires to pay the same income tax rates as the rest of us, instead of dodging behind the lower capital gains rate. Is that really such a hard sell, Democrats? If the public knew that the top ten hedge fund managers were averaging \$900,000 an hour (not a typo) during the worst economic year since the Depression--and paying lower income tax rates than the rest of us--the American public would be outraged. Of course, to push this plan the politicians would need to have the guts to upset billionaires.

(Meanwhile, [Timothy Geithner](#) is signaling that the Administration will hold down capital gains taxes on the super-rich.)

But even the gutless ought to know that blaming the unemployed for unemployment is insane --not to mention incredibly mean-spirited.

2. Unemployment is caused by "structural" problems in the labor markets. *Labor markets have to be freed from constraints like decent pensions, a reasonable retirement age, and adequate health care benefits. These public benefits -sometimes known as the social wage -- are keeping employers from hiring. So, sorry, Americans, we'll just have to work longer and harder for less.*

This chilling proposal, now on the lips of Republicans and Democrats alike, will clearly make the markets happy. But what about the rest of us?

Is this grim belt-tightening really going to bring back the 8 million jobs we lost?

If we cut the social wage, corporations certainly will save on labor costs and accumulate more cash. But will they productively invest it? Not according to [Yves Smith and Rob Parenteau](#). They argue that corporate America greatly prefers to pocket the cash and use it for gambling on Wall Street:

To develop new products, buy new equipment or expand geographically, an enterprise has to spend money -- on marketing research, product design, prototype development, legal expenses associated with patents, lining up contractors and so on. Rather than incur such expenses, companies increasingly prefer to pay their executives exorbitant bonuses, or issue special dividends to shareholders, or engage in purely financial speculation. But this means they also short-circuit a major driver of economic growth.

3. The only real jobs are private sector jobs. *You see, only the private sector can rescue our economy because the jobs they create spring from consumer supply and demand, not the dictates of corrupt or know-it-all politicians. When you work for the public sector, you're practically on the dole because your wages come from tax dollars. That's quasi-socialism.*

Has anyone noticed that private industry has been on the public dole for decades? We have millions of alleged private sector jobs funded by the Defense Department and through subsidies for industries from sugar to oil, and of course banking. We've given so many tax dodges to corporate America that most companies pay almost no taxes at all. The idea of a purely private sector is pure fiction, a soothing fairy tale for Tea Partiers and faith-based, free-market ideologues.

Despite all the perks we've been giving to corporate America, it's not at all clear that the private sector will ever again create enough decent jobs to support a middle class society in this country. Right now the economy is supposedly growing, but employment isn't. So what is growing? Well, the obscene bonuses and pay packages of corporate America and Wall Street --- the only growth that counts for our financial elites.

We're at a critical point in the jobs crisis. Nearly 30 million of us don't have jobs or have been forced into part-time jobs. It's not like there's no work to do. We have millions and millions of kids to educate. We desperately need to slash our energy use--and with an army of workers, we could weatherize every home and business in the country. Our bridges and roads will take decades to repair. We need to build an entire national system of efficient public transit.

When Wall Street is in trouble, we come to the rescue with trillions in bailouts. We've poured hundreds of billions more into two wars. But when it comes to investing in our people to get needed work done, we can't seem to summon the will or find the cash.

There's a one-sided war going on between financial elites and the rest of us. They've engineered the economy to enrich themselves at our expense, with Wall Street taking the lead.

The numbers don't lie: In 1970 the top 100 CEOs earned approximately \$45 for every dollar earned by the average worker. By last year, it was \$1,081 to one. (See [The Looting of America.](#))

There is no economic theory that can explain this obscene gap. It has nothing to do with talent or productivity or even luck. It's just raw power. And the only thing that financial power understands is countervailing power in the form of a popular mass movement - a movement that only can start once we stop blaming ourselves for the jobs crisis.

We have our work cut out for us.

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Les Leopold is the author of [The Looting of America: How Wall Street's Game of Fantasy Finance destroyed our Jobs, Pensions and Prosperity, and What We Can Do About It](#), Chelsea Green Publishing, June 2009.

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Wealthy Are Cashing in Huge, While Workers' Salaries Keep Shrinking

By Adrienne Appel [article link](#)

July 10 2010 | IPS News | AlterNet

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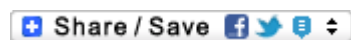
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Corporations Gone Wild (As Jefferson Warned Us)

By Mary Shaw [article link](#)

July 12 2010 | OpEdNews

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Les Leopold: Is there a Global War Between Financial Theocracy and Democracy?

Is there a Global War Between Financial Theocracy and Democracy?

by Les Leopold [article link](#)

June 11 2010 | Huffington Post

Senate and House conferees are about to reconcile a financial reform bill that is virtually designed to institutionalize "too big to fail." And when they do we'll lose another battle in the ongoing war between global financial markets and democratic nation-states.

This war has been going on for decades -- but democracy hasn't always been in full retreat.

The New Deal Conquest: During the Great Depression democratic forces gained the upper hand in the war. We realized that financial markets, which are driven by the largest banks and financiers, had to be tightly controlled. We knew that global speculation on currencies only deepened the Depression and had to be strictly limited. We knew that an iron curtain was needed between commercial and investment banking to protect Main Street depositors from market madness (that was the Glass-Steagall Act). And most importantly we knew that the key to preventing economic upheaval was to limit the wealth of the super-rich and to increase the wealth of working people through progressive taxes, Social Security, wage and hour laws, and the promotion of unionization. The Bretton Woods agreements forged by the Allies during WWII set up strict rules for global finance, rules that kept financiers in check for more than a quarter century.

And it worked pretty damn well. As economist Joseph Stiglitz points out, this era saw only one financial crisis (Brazil, 1964), and working people in western democracies made huge gains. Since the era of deregulation took hold in the late 1970s, the world has suffered over a hundred financial crises and middle-class incomes have stagnated.

The Deregulatory Counter-Offensive: By the late 1970s, bankers regained the advantage through the spread of a new faith in self-regulated markets. The economic apostles of unfettered markets lobbied against progressive taxes, unions, and social welfare programs. The new orthodoxy was: Let the elites collect the money--they'll invest wisely (instead of consuming), and all boats will rise. This near-religious revolution rapidly spread through the economic and policy establishment. Regulations were dismantled right and left, and the revolving door between government and Wall Street started spinning. The American financial catechism ruled the world. And on Wall Street, the money tap was open. It did not trickle down.

Then, suddenly, in 2008, the market gods destroyed themselves as the unregulated financial casinos crashed and burned, just like they did in 1929. For a few months, it seemed like the deregulatory theology became a global heresy. It was obvious that Wall Street's reckless speculation and its bold new wave of financial engineering had caused the Great Recession. (See *The Looting of America* for an accessible account.). It was also clear that if government didn't come to the rescue, Wall Street would lay in ruins, along with the rest of the economy. This was the perfect moment for democracy to reassert democratic control on financial markets, just as we did during the New Deal. We blew it.

The Victory at Too Big to Fail: At the moment when Wall Street was on its knees, we decided to bypass serious reform. Instead, we rebuilt Wall Street, using taxpayer money and guarantees - more than \$10 trillion worth. We let bankers use our bailout money to pay themselves \$150 billion in bonuses -- at a moment when over 29 million Americans were jobless or forced into part-time jobs. We allowed the top hedge fund managers to walk off with over \$900,000 an hour (not a typo) in 2009. Windfall profits taxes? No. In fact we let hedge fund honchos pay an extra-low tax rate by calling their income "capital gains." We didn't restore Glass-Steagall, we didn't break up "too big to fail" financial institutions. In fact the biggest banks became even bigger, courtesy of the U.S. government.

The Invasion against Democracy: The war is escalating. Right now, financial elites aren't just fighting a defensive battle against new regulations. They're playing offense: They're whipping up deficit hysteria around the globe and calling for drastic cuts in middle class programs. Why? They want to ensure that their loans to governments aren't threatened by rising public debt. Ironically, the public debt they're so worried about was created in large part by them -- the result of huge bailouts and other expenses stemming from the crash they caused. Although the bankers want us to dismantle what remains of our worker-oriented policies, welfare for the financial elites is still fine and dandy.

This is the most dangerous counter attack in the history of finance. We had better know a great deal more about the attackers. Who makes up this shadowy force called "global markets"? Who fights their battles? Do they have a high command?

Not really. There is no executive committee of financial elites. There's no international conspiracy, no Elders of Zion. Instead these markets are pulled and pushed by about 50 very large banks and financial institutions. This is where much of the nation's \$2 trillion in hedge fund money roams. This is where the top six US banks frolic. They don't have to sit around a table strategizing. They instantly sense threats to their power. They instantly smell profitable openings and they're poised to grab what they can, whenever they can. They thrive on turmoil, which gives them new "proprietary" trading opportunities to exploit. Volatility means big bucks, especially now that the largest players know that the government will back up even their wildest gambles. History has just proven that they are way too big to fail.

Of course they still have to lobby government officials--many of whom either were bankers, or will be once they leave office. But their most powerful lever on government is through the market itself: Here, by moving vast quantities of money around, they can instantly veto policies they don't like. If the EU talks seriously about financial transaction taxes, the markets go down the Euro grows weaker, and interest rates rise--making it more expensive for governments to borrow the money they need to operate. Politicians have learned to "listen" to the markets and are conditioned to placate them.

Should a nation state get out of line (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, etc), the markets slap them silly. Politicians rush to the scene and start slicing social spending. If instead they demand new taxes on financial elites to reduce public debt, the markets respond with even more fury. Money flees.

All the external machinery of democracy still clanks along. We still pull the levers in the voting booth. But the decisions that affect us the most are made in a profoundly undemocratic way. Faceless financial markets exercise far more control over politicians than the voters who elected them.

So the problem isn't just the corporate campaign contributions, or corporate media control or the academic consensus supporting our financial theocracy. It's the raw power of the markets. They've been roaming free and virtually unregulated for more than a generation, and now their power is unparalleled. Just months after they brought our economy crashing down, they're right back to their old tricks, setting the stage for the next crash and the next bailout while getting filthy rich along the way.

Bill Clinton nailed it on the head when he reportedly said:

"You mean to tell me that the success of the economic program and my reelection hinges on the Federal Reserve and a bunch of fxxing bond traders?" (See Agenda by Bob Woodward)

No Retreat, No Surrender? There's no room for pacifists in this war. Clearly, Wall Street and its global minions are not seeking a truce. Instead, they're coming after our Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid programs. They want us to work longer before we retire and get less when we do. They want us to pay more for health care and get less of it. They want less public money to go to schools, teachers and public infrastructures. And they want us to get used to a jobless recovery with double digit unemployment rates. (And when millions and millions of people are unemployed, we can't maintain high labor standards, and our wages and benefits erode.) In short, they want to undermine all the policies and programs that have built and sustained middle class life.

Already government officials in the UK, Germany and here are telling us we must endure austerity for "decades to come." As Fed Chair [Ben Bernanke candidly put it](#):

"We can see what problems can arise in a country if investors lose confidence in the fiscal position of that country, so it is very important that we address this problem."

Of course, he's not going to point out that this austerity is only for the masses, definitely not for the financial elites. Or that the underlying cause of the debt investors are so worried about is the giant economic crater caused by the very same financial elites who now might "lose confidence" in financing a middle class society.

We shouldn't kid ourselves about the pitched battles ahead. Fighting back won't be easy, and winning will be even harder. People in country after country will have to mobilize themselves in defense of real democracy, in defense of each nation's right to provide its people with a decent quality of life. In my opinion, that includes sustainable jobs with decent benefits and a solid public infrastructure that promotes equity, protects the vulnerable and enriches the environment.

Unfortunately, no one can guarantee that democracy will prevail in the war against financial theocracy -- just recall the totalitarian chaos in Europe during the Great Depression. But don't count it out, either. It's true that many of us regular folks have been diverted by the media, distracted by the Internet or lulled into a stupor by pharmaceuticals. But when we realize that we've been shoved into a corner with no way out, we'll act. A popular struggle will begin. And when it does, we'll at least have a fighting chance to recapture our democratic souls.

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Les Leopold is the author of [The Looting of America: How Wall Street's Game of Fantasy Finance destroyed our Jobs, Pensions and Prosperity, and What We Can Do About It](#), Chelsea Green Publishing, June 2009.

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Taming Finance in an Age of Austerity

by Joseph E. Stiglitz [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 12, 2010 | Project Syndicate | CommonDreams

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Tremble, Banks, Tremble

The key to financial recovery: restoring the rule of law on Wall Street.

by James K. Galbraith [article link](#) [article link](#)

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:05 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Sunday, July 11, 2010

Melvin A. Goodman: Obama's Bungled Military Strategies

Obama's Bungled Military Strategies, Part III

by: Melvin A. Goodman [article link](#) [article link](#)

08 July 2010 | Consortium News | t r u t h o u t

Editor's Note: This is Part III of a series by former CIA analyst Melvin A. Goodman addressing the presidency and the Pentagon.

[Part I](#) examined what President Dwight Eisenhower knew about the military as a retired five-star general and what he tried to impart to his successors. [Part II](#) looked at President Obama's challenges. Part III focuses on how Obama has failed to meet those tests:

President Barack Obama inherited a difficult national security situation — wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; an exaggerated and counterproductive war on terror; debilitating deficits and rising debt; an obstructionist Congress; and a corporate media that has abandoned its watchdog ethos.

Unfortunately, President Obama did not have the experience to manage this daunting challenge. He had scant background in foreign policy, military policy or defense expenditures. Nor did he have much knowledge about the major players in these fields.

As a result of these shortcomings, the President assembled a team for most of the wrong reasons. He made his two major national security appointments for domestic political reasons.

Hillary Clinton was made secretary of state to build bridges to her wing of the Democratic Party following a nasty political campaign and to head off any Clinton reprisals. George W. Bush's Defense Secretary Robert Gates was retained as a sop to "bipartisanship" and to conservative Republicans.

The Gates appointment was particularly damaging because it demonstrated deference to the Pentagon's power structure and acceptance of Gates's continued authority. When Obama wanted to place the reform-minded Richard Danzig in as deputy defense secretary, Gates blocked the move, showing his continued clout and dashing hopes of some Democrats that he would serve only as a temporary bridge from the Bush administration.

Instead, Gates and another Bush favorite, General David Petraeus, have emerged as the leading voices on national security policy. Their strength is magnified by the weakness and disunity of other senior officials on Obama's national security team.

For instance, Official Washington and the corporate media have hailed Obama's choice of Petraeus to replace General Stanley McChrystal as commander in charge of the Afghan War. Yet, this move also has increased the power of the Pentagon to override any deadline for troop withdrawal from the nation's longest war.

Neither Petraeus nor his bosses (Gates and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mike Mullen) have accepted Obama's notion of a deadline to begin significant withdrawals of U.S. troops next summer. McChrystal's contemptuous remarks in Rolling Stone exposed an even deeper strain of resistance to the civilian government at the highest levels of the uniformed military.

This insubordination should have been addressed in October 2009 when McChrystal challenged Afghan policy while a decision on additional troops was still being debated at the White House. Now, given the messy circumstances of McChrystal's firing, Petraeus is virtually untouchable.

To make matters worse, President Obama has exempted the military budget from the fiscal restraint being applied to other parts of the federal government. The \$708 billion defense budget for 2011 is higher than at any point in post-World War II history, says Gordon Adams of American University.

No End in Sight

The new emphasis on counterinsurgency, counterterrorism and so-called "stability operations," which the corporate media terms a "reform," will create opportunities for new military deployments overseas. There is no end in sight to this spending, unless the Obama administration finds a new toughness to freeze the defense budget, stop force expansion, and set genuine procurement priorities.

Instead of the needed firmness, President Obama has contributed to the militarization of overall national security policy by appointing general officers to key positions that should have been in the hands of civilians. These appointments include the national security adviser; the intelligence tsar (first a retired admiral and, more recently, a retired general); ambassadors to such key states as Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia; and a mediator for Sudan.

All of these generals and admirals have had difficulty dealing with the foreign policy bureaucracy, and there are rumors that two of them (National Security Adviser James Jones and Ambassador to Afghanistan Kurt Eikenberry) are on the way out.

Meanwhile, there has been no attempt to reverse the militarization of the intelligence community, which includes the Pentagon's near total control over the intelligence budget and personnel.

The State Department should be the major counter to the Defense Department, but Foggy Bottom has not had a strong leader since James Baker was the steward for foreign policy two decades ago. The department has been in decline ever since, particularly during the last five years under Condoleezza Rice and now Hillary Clinton.

Rice had contempt for the Foreign Service; Clinton talks a much better game but has surrounded herself with congressional and personal aides who have little knowledge of foreign policy and little political clout in the administration.

President Obama's appointment of three so-called "tsars" for such important issues as the Middle East, Iran, and Afghanistan-Pakistan also demonstrated a lack of confidence in Clinton and her department. Further, the appointments created an unnecessary bureaucratic layer that has confused foreign leaders and contributed to a sclerotic foreign policy.

It is hard to recall a time when the National Security Council was weaker than it is today. The NSC hasn't even functioned as an umpire in disputes between State and Defense or between the key intelligence agencies that have been in turmoil since the so-called reorganization in 2004.

General Jones has been a weak national security adviser, ignoring the important public role of the position and failing to organize the bureaucracy. As a result, on key matters dealing with Afghanistan and Israel, the administration has spoken with several voices.

Defense Secretary Gates even lectured Jones in a sensitive letter about the failure to develop sufficient strategies and policies for dealing with Iran's nuclear capabilities.

Last year, North Korea invited former President Clinton to Pyongyang to settle a major diplomatic dispute, an obvious signal of interest in bilateral diplomacy, but Jones made no attempt to engage the foreign policy bureaucracy in a discussion about this opportunity.

Intelligence in Turmoil

The intelligence community is in particular turmoil and no longer serves as a check and balance to the primacy of the Pentagon. Jones has allowed delays in the publication of an important update to the National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's nuclear program, creating a vacuum for the administration's hawks to engage in strong rhetoric about Iran's alleged nuclear ambitions that may not be backed up by the intelligence analysis.

This situation opens the door to a return to politicized intelligence, as analysts grow fearful of contradicting the dire claims made by senior officials. Instead of intelligence analysis informing policy, the danger is that policymakers will stake out positions and then expect the analysts to fall into line.

Inside the CIA, the appointment of a weak CIA director, Leon Panetta, has left in place many of the operational ideologues who were responsible for secret prisons, abusive interrogations, torture and renditions. Obama has contributed to a continuation of the old ways by failing to appoint a statutory Inspector General, a position that has been vacant for nearly his entire first term.

President Obama will likely lack a handle on this deteriorating national security situation until he realizes that Afghanistan is not central to the terrorism threat against the United States and that the stability of Pakistan is far more important to U.S. security in South and Southwest Asia.

Sending more troops and resources into Afghanistan does not begin to address the threat of international terrorism, and no amount of economic assistance to Pakistan will buy support from Islamabad.

In 1987, the new Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev called Afghanistan a "bleeding wound" and began the process of withdrawal. However, in 2010, since General McChrystal called Afghanistan a "bleeding wound," there has been no sign of a U.S. withdrawal strategy. Instead, General Petraeus is once again brandishing the notion of victory.

Until there is some indication that President Obama can stand up to the Pentagon and the Congress (and to some extent, the corporate media) on issues such as Afghanistan, defense spending, and homeland security, the serious domestic needs of the country will continue to go wanting and the United States will become increasingly isolated in the world.

Finally, the president must understand the wisdom of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who "strongly believed that the United States — indeed, any nation — could only be as militarily strong as it was economically dynamic and fiscally sound."

Instead, the United States has developed a garrison mentality — and has become economically stagnant and strategically insolvent. Until President Obama recognizes the need for military restraint, the United States will continue to blunder unilaterally into unnecessary confrontations.

He needs to learn from his presidential hero, Abraham Lincoln, who understood when conflicts were essential for the nation's survival and when they weren't. Lincoln opposed the war with Mexico from 1846-48, but called the Civil War -- the fight to save the Union -- an "issue which can only be tried by war and decided by victory."

The war in Afghanistan is not that kind of war. Indeed, American use of force since the end of the Cold War has served only to weaken the nation, draining resources and costing the lives of far too many fighting men and women.

One would hope that Obama has learned from the McChrystal affair that he needs to shake up his national security team – and his own thinking.

Melvin A. Goodman, a senior fellow at the [Center for International Policy](#) and adjunct professor of government at Johns Hopkins University, spent 42 years with the CIA, the National War College, and the U.S. Army. His latest book is [Failure of Intelligence: The Decline and Fall of the CIA](#).

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Tim Gatto: American Complicity Today

American Complicity Today

Why I Started the South Carolina Upstate Coalition

By Tim Gatto [article link](#)

10 July 2010 | Liberalpro | Countercurrents

I haven't been writing for quite some time. It gets to the point as Paul Craig Roberts said; “[Nobody is listening](#)”. There are some that are listening as my articles have received many hits. While I'm happy about that, it just isn't enough. The people that read my articles are the people that already know what dire straits our Democracy in America is in. Most of my readers know that the legislative branch, the executive branch and now it seems the Supreme court as well as the lower federal courts have been co-opted by those that have the money and clout to do so. I read a brilliant article by Lawrence Wilkerson ([Right Wing Thought Police MWC News](#)) that blew me away. It's not what he said; it was what he didn't say that completely blew me away. Let me write a short list of what Americans should be concerned about.

1. The War in Afghanistan and Iraq.

These wars are totally unconstitutional. We were never attacked by the Taliban or Saddam Hussein. The reasons for the wars are bogus. We went into Iraq because Saddam had threatened to sell oil in Euro's not dollars, undermining American currency. The war in Afghanistan is to complete TAPI, the pipeline for gas and oil coming from the Caucasus and preventing Russia from having a lock on oil exports to Europe. These are wars of aggression, pure and simple.

2. The loss of American Civil Liberties

With implementation of The Patriot Act, The Military Commissions Act and The John Warner Insurrection Act that allows Federal Troops for peacekeeping duties within the Continental U.S. in violation of Posse Comitatus. We have “free speech zones” that keep demonstrators behind chain link fencing away from the demonstrator's target zone, rendering demonstrations ineffective.

3. Wiretapping and electronic eavesdropping on American citizens.

The enhanced FISA laws did not hold accountable the telecoms that illegally copied all conversations of Americans that was unlawfully demanded of them by the Federal Government. We still are subject to warrantless tapping of our phones and eavesdropping on our computer correspondence.

4. Holding no One Accountable

The reluctance to hold anyone accountable for the incomprehensible acts of 9/11, No building hit by an airplane can fall at free-fall. Building 7 wasn't touched and came down in its own footprint. This is ridiculous to believe that airplanes that made maneuvers that are theoretically impossible brought down those buildings. Nano-thermites were found on the steel girders, yet no investigation is forthcoming and the American citizenry has not demanded it. Why? The building fell at free fall which under the governments "pancake" the only way that would have been impossible. The only way those buildings could have fallen at free fall would have been if the underpinnings were knocked out. This is the law of physics.

4. Obama's Unwillingness to Act in the Public's Interest

The Obama Administration's blatant refusal to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate torture and to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate the accusations of torture under the Bush/Cheney regime. The refusal to have a criminal investigation into the events of 9/11. To stop the practice of Extraordinary Rendition (kidnapping) instead of using the rule of law. The failure to abide by the Geneva Conventions.

5. The non-news given to the majority of Americans.

The mainstream milquetoast reporting of news that is neutral to events in the world that our government is pursuing. The fourth estate in this country has been co-opted by the same interests that need them to stay silent. No true investigative reporting on the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan is being conducted. The news reports on celebrities and divisions between the Republicans and Democrats which are only two-sides of the same coin.

6. Failure to release Military and Special Ops Budgets.

The budgets of the military and the investigative agencies like the CIA and the NSA and the 14 intelligence agencies run by the military is never reported on in the mainstream media. The military budget as a whole hardly ever makes the news. Why?

7. Truth about the Bail-Outs

The bank bailouts and Goldman Sachs that bought up failing banks after they received the TARP fund that made them liquid again has not resulted in criminal charges. There has been very little help for the average American citizen.

8. Ongoing Illegal Activities

The continuing practice of Rendition (kidnapping) of people by the United States continues. The phony trial of Khalid Sheik Muhammad (KSM) goes on after it was made public that he was water boarded 183 times and confessed to crimes that were committed four years after he was apprehended. A travesty of justice.

9. Supporting a Rogue State

The support of Israel that gas for the last few decades has shown itself to be a rogue state that violates all the International rules of behavior and has the city of Gaza under a terrible blockade that makes it a virtual prison. They have annexed Palestinian lands and East Jerusalem throwing out Palestinians that have lived there for hundreds of years. This is a form of genocide in which the United States supports by supporting Israel. There is no reason strong enough to continue to support that criminal enterprise. The refusal of Israel to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty illustrate the criminality of their government, yet we berate Iran who Has signed the NPT and abides by the treaty.

These are just some of the points that I would like to make. The co-opting of the Congress by special interests along with the Supreme Court should be investigated. The rule of law in this country is practically non-existent when it comes to the Federal Government. It applies to the people however. If we break a law we are expected to pay the consequences. People understand that Homeland Security was designed to watch the people of the US, not the terrorists.

This is why I have decided to become an activist and reach out to others that believe as I do. We can no longer sit on the sidelines and wait for someone to rescue this nation. We have become a belligerent nation ruled by the Military-Industrial-Complex. People need to reach out to likeminded individuals and band together and make our voices heard. If we can do it in the reddest State in the Union, it can be done anywhere. To join the South Carolina Upstate Coalition, contact me (timgatto@hotmail.com), we can make a difference.

(MMr Note: numeric sequence #4 in original article)

Read Tim's Books "[Complicity to Contempt](#)" and "[Kimchee Days or Stoned Cold Warriors](#)" from Oliver Arets and Open Press.

From Complicity to Contempt details the changing political views of an Army veteran of 21 years. From the opening of the "Global war on Terror," this writer-patriot saw that his beliefs about his country were no longer based on truth. The Constitution and Bill of Rights were being dismantled in plain sight and the majority of his fellow citizens were either unaware of it or failing to stop it. Gatto's book provides a highly personal but also powerful look into the frustration and anger of an American who came to see that everything he'd stood for throughout his whole life was being turned into a fraud. **Tim Gatto** was born in 1950 and grew up in the Cold War era. Idealistically, he enlisted in the Army in 1968, though the Vietnam War soon began shaping and changing his ideas about American foreign policy, much as it did for most of his generation. While still serving, he joined the protest against the war. And later, after witnessing the fraudulent run-up to the Iraq war engineered by the Bush administration, he became politically active all over again-and began writing, prolifically and for an ever-widening audience. He lives in South Carolina, a liberal in one of the reddest states in the country.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:16 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Saturday, July 10, 2010

[Mira Luna: How to Share Time](#)

How to Share Time

When dollars are scarce, timebanks help neighbors swap skills, instead.

by Mira Luna [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 10, 2010 | YES! Magazine | CommonDreams

During the last two great depressions in the U.S., hundreds of thousands (possibly millions) of people organized to meet their basic needs when the mainstream economy and centralized monetary system failed them. Unemployed poor folks got together to create time dollar stores and cooperative mills, farms, health care systems, foundries, repair and recycling facilities, distribution warehouses, and a myriad of other service exchanges.

Many of these were based on the hour as a unit of account, and often everyone's hour was equal and could either be exchanged for another hour of service or its equivalent in goods.

Modern forms of time exchange, called Timebanks and LETS (Local Employment Trading Systems), have been around since the 1980s. Now, with one in ten Americans unemployed (likely twice that, given recording problems), time exchanges are making a comeback.

[Timebanks USA](#), a system of over 120 timebanks in the U.S. and a few other countries, was developed by activist lawyer Edgar Cahn as a way to help the underprivileged and underserved help each other through an organized [system of reciprocity](#). In the following interview, Cahn explains the basic principles behind timebanks: [YouTube video](#)

Official Timebanks purchase software that provides a ready-made, standardized directory and accounting system of individuals, and sometimes nonprofits or government agencies, that are willing to provide services to their communities and receive help in return.

Timebank coordinators help create matches between people who need things and others who can help meet those needs, and they keep track of completed transactions in the system. No money is involved, and everyone's hour is equal, which is one of the features that enabled Timebanks to receive an official IRS income tax exemption declaration so that people on disability, social security, unemployment, and other government benefits can participate without penalty.

The egalitarian nature of the system ensures that people will be able to purchase the services that they need without toiling endlessly to meet high prices in the market economy. People can also trade goods with the stipulation that their price be based on the amount of time involved in producing the goods and not their market value. Timebanks' most successful application has been to provide a means for at-risk youth who have gone to court to do service for their community.

LETS systems also operate without money (except for fixed costs like gas or paper copies), but the value of time or goods may be linked to market value. Every community determines its own rules, so every LETS is a little different. LETS are now mostly online accounting and directory systems just like Timebanks, but they have also taken the form of paper ledgers, checkbooks, paper currencies, and time-based stores.

When one person provides service or goods to another, the giver receives credit in her account and the receiver gets a debit to his account so the system is always in balance. People manage their own accounts and make payment over the internet by logging into their personal account. Businesses, nonprofits, and government may also have accounts if they are involved in reciprocal community exchange. Some systems have account balance limits, others don't or merely flag high or low balances and then contact members to help them figure out how to spend or earn their credits.

Many communities have created similar time exchange projects, going by names like Fourth Corner Exchange, Village Networks, Richmond Hours, and Austin Time Exchange.

Probably the largest time exchange in the world is the Fureai Kippu in Japan. Fureai Kippu ("Caring Relationship Tickets") was created in 1995 to help families who had migrated to other parts of Japan care for elder family members from whom they'd been separated. Seniors can help each other and earn the hour credits, family members can earn credits and transfer them to their parents who live elsewhere, or users may keep credits for when they become sick or elderly themselves.

Free open source software is now available for any community to tailor a time exchange to its own needs and to reflect the local culture. Many of these projects also have regular in-person meetings, swaps, and potlucks to help facilitate exchange, trust, and community building.

While we may not have many dollars these days, most people do have some time. Instead of paying professionals who we may never see again to provide services, we can use time exchanges to find neighbors who might provide service in exchange for hour credits, thereby saving scarce U.S. dollars for things like rent and medicine.

In the process, people get to know and trust their neighbors, [establishing caring relationships](#) that can help reweave the fabric of our communities, and replace our culture's over-reliance on individual financial security.

Mira Luna is a San Francisco based activist who is working on developing an alternative economy in the Bay Area. She helps coordinate Bay Area Community Exchange, a local timebank, JASecon, and the Really Really Free Market. She originally wrote this article for [Shareable.net](#), a new online magazine that explores the ways that sharing is transforming life in the twenty-first century

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Looking Beyond Money, Living Beyond Fear by Tamara Brennan [MMr article link](#)
What is MONEY? [MMr article link](#)
Community Currency: Berkshares [MMr article link](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:02 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

David Michael Green: How's That Recessioney, Oily Thing Working Out For Ya?

How's That Recessioney, Oily Thing Working Out For Ya?

by David Michael Green [article link](#)

The Regressive Antidote

Let's be honest: We live in stunningly, jaw-droppingly, ridiculously absurd political times.

Here's the story in a nutshell: A far-right predatory overclass has spent the last thirty years undoing the hard-fought gains of the mid-twentieth century, which had produced a robust middle class and vastly more economic and social justice in America than the country had ever known before. These regressives used every kind of deceit imaginable to persuade unsophisticated voters to choose candidates whose real agenda was to assist their plutocratic puppetmasters in fleecing the very same people who voted for them.

Such candidates ran on issues like the death penalty, immigration, bogus wars, gay marriage and abortion. But what they really were about as legislators was exporting jobs to where workers are dirt cheap and politically neutered, crashing organized labor, shifting the tax burden onto the mass public, deregulating industry to allow unhindered profit-taking on the upside and socialized public responsibility for risk on the downside, and locking in a Supreme Court majority that would never blanch at even the most outrageous rulings enhancing corporate power in American society.

If the product of this slow and silent coup wasn't so bloody and so ruinous to so many lives, you'd really have to hand it to these guys for their political acumen and patience. It took a while, and it required the building of a broad and robust infrastructure, spanning from mainstream media to talk radio and TV to think-tanks to Congress, the presidency and the judiciary, to the GOP and now to the Democratic Party as well, but they have pretty much completely succeeded in grabbing all the levers of power in our society. They dominate its discourse entirely, and they have been almost completely successful to date in securing all the elements of their legislative, regulatory and jurisprudential agenda, at least to this point (how far they ultimately intend to go isn't clear – the US as Honduras, perhaps? – but it's unlikely to be pretty). Perhaps the only major exception to that rule was their 2005 failure to privatize the vast pool of public money sitting in the Social Security coffers, which they lust over lasciviously, like teenage boys inhaling online porn by the bucketful.

The product of these efforts has been precisely what one would expect. Corporations and economic elites have grown fantastically more wealthy than they already were thirty years ago. Their tax liabilities are now negligible and sometimes less than zero. Massive national debt, the product in part of those tax gifts to the rich, plus huge bills for interest on that debt (this alone is one of the largest items in the federal budget each year), is now owned by the mass public, who got nickels and dimes worth of tax cuts, in exchange for which they will now have to literally work years of their lives to pay down the taxes the rich escaped. Working people across the country get less and pay more for everything today. College is becoming increasingly out of the financial reach of average Americans. The minimum wage, which actually often isn't the minimum, is far from a sustainable salary for one person, let alone a family. As of 2004, the richest one percent of Americans possessed sixty percent of all wealth in the country, while the bottom forty percent accounted for a whopping two-tenths of a percent. Between 1979 and 2004, after-tax income for the top one percent of Americans rose by 176 percent, while for those in the bottom 20 percent that figure rose only six percent. And those figures are for six years ago, during what by current standards was flush times for working people. Now jobs are disappearing, with the inevitable effect

of driving wages down further, not to mention all the obvious effects on prosperity, security, health, mental health and sheer longevity.

Meanwhile, just the approach to regulation alone has produced three monstrous attacks on American society as a direct result. First the recession-starting-to-become-a-depression and all its devastation, then the recent mining disaster, and now BP's WMD attack on the Gulf Coast states. What all of these have in common is a government regulatory apparatus that over time transitioned from a public service mission into deference to those supposed to be regulated, and then from deference for the corporate sphere into constituting a straight-out satellite office of the corporations themselves, literally having business supposed 'regulatees' fill out their own monitoring forms in pencil, to be inked in later by the planted skills in government. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have been wiped out by these actions and the public is paying for its own thrashing through bail-out funds. I'm sorry, but in what sense is this not treason?

Okay, so far so bad. Nothing particularly Alice-In-Wonderlandy or especially novel about rampant greed, is there? But what's really bizarre to the point of being becoming a fully hallucinogenic experience that really should come under the supervision of the Controlled Substances Act is the effect that this has had on politics. Could there ever be a moment when right-wing 'economics' have been so thoroughly and manifestly repudiated? Could there ever be more overt examples of corporate greed gone nuclear? Could the repercussions of these policy decisions ever more clearly have wrecked the lives of economically insecure ordinary Americans?

No, no and no. All this is as obvious and predictable as sunrise. And yet... Here we find ourselves in this remarkable and remarkably absurd position where the folks who not only created this monster, who not only have worked assiduously to prevent any solutions to the destruction they've wrought, and who now also promise even more of the same – these very folks are poised to win resounding electoral victories in November. And the folks who will be voting for them will once again become victims of their predations. And the folks in Congress and the White House they'll be voting against – supposed socialist-fascists (whatever strange Janus-faced zoological beast that would look like if it actually existed) – are in fact just about the most pro-plutocrat government imaginable. But they're going to get stomped by voters for being socialists.

How on earth did this happen?

Well, to start with, it happened because it was intended to happen. As described above, this is the product of a broad, concerted and patient effort by the radical right to capture and control American government, and it has worked remarkably well, especially when one considers the sheer amount of deceit required to pull it off. It's like trying to sell a cocktail of Dirt Drink mixed with Sawdust Soda to a man dying of thirst. But it can be done, and we know that because the process is now all but complete. When even John McCain refers to Congress "the best government that money can buy" you know you're really hurting, pal. As for that Trotskyite socialist in the White House, well he's staffed his economic team directly out of Goldman Sachs' boardroom, he bails out mega-banks one hundred cents on the dollar without even requiring that they loan money, he wrote a health care bill that forces thirty or forty million Americans to buy a product from bloated thieving insurance companies whether they want it or not, and he has dramatically increased spending on an already astonishingly distended military, while remaining essentially silent about (meager but essential) unemployment benefits right now in the process of terminating for millions of Americans. Yeah, baby – that socialist. "Workers of the world unite" is definitely what they rap about at White House cabinet meetings. Geithner, Summers, Gates – all those revolutionary syndicalists can't talk it up enough. Then they sing "The Internationale".

Clearly, the political branches of the US government have been fully captured by monied elites. Perhaps scariest of all, however, is the newly emboldened ultra-radical majority on the Supreme Court (that description is not reckless hyperbole used for effect – look at what they've done in cases like *Bush v. Gore*, *Ledbetter* and *Citizens United*, and watch what they do in the coming years – it will be astonishing in its scope, radicalism and hypocrisy). After decades of histrionic lies about supposed objections to judicial activism (what they really hated was the impudent offense of an elite court handing down liberal decisions and siding with mere mortals in American society, period), they have now kicked out the jams to expand the practical definition of the 'activism' term beyond all recognition. Lori Blatt, former attorney in the Solicitor General's Office, put it best: "They are fearless. This is a business court. Now it's the era of the corporation and the interests of business." No case underscored this tendency better than *Citizens United*, of course, where the regressive majority was so

blatantly activist that they literally told the stunned litigants to go home, come back in a month and reargue the case around a far, far bigger question than was at stake for the parties involved, and then sweepingly cast aside long existing law in order to blow blitzkrieg-size breaches in the barriers that had previously controlled corporate influence of elections. The only case that can rival this one for utterly transparent activism seeking a regressive outcome is *Bush v. Gore*, in which the right-wing bloc simultaneously violated three of their own cardinal tenets – judicial restraint, states’ rights, and hostility to civil rights principles – in order to require vote counting be stopped (say what?!) and to crown the mentally deficient dauphin as king. It could hardly be clearer that the Roberts Court ominously completes the troika of the right-wing governmental coup.

But there are other reasons we’re in this state, as well. Think about Barack Obama and the Democrats for a second, and then try applying Ms. Blatt’s phrase, “They are fearless”, to those folks. Now pick yourself up the floor. Change the underwear you just soiled from laughing so hard. Wring out the hanky you just soaked from sobbing so relentlessly. Part of why we’re in this mess is that Democrats wouldn’t know what guts looked like if they were all board-certified gastrointestinal surgeons. But, of course, to complain that “the people’s party” lacks sufficient courage of their convictions assumes that they have any. The good news is that they do, as a matter of fact. The bad news, however, is that those convictions can be reduced neatly down to two: serving themselves and serving the nice folks who donate money to get them elected. It’s a bit of a problem when the gang who are meant to protect us from the crimes of the GOP are nearly indistinguishable from Cheney’s thugs, apart from stylistically. Democrats are happy to give you a little kiss on the cheek before they screw you. Republicans prefer to just get on with the assault.

Then there’s the media in this country which is, of course, beyond hopeless. Watching Rachel Maddow the other month throwing a few medium-speed hardballs at Rand Paul only served to remind me just how rare it is for any of these pathetic hacks to actually do their job, as opposed to doing the cash-driven bidding of those in power, especially tough-guy Republicans who must get plenty of laughs out of how easy it is to bully the Washington press whores – er, sorry, I mean press corps. There’s nothing quite so self-made as the disasters of Election 2000 and the Iraq invasion of 2003, and the absence of any sort of serious media scepticism in those cases simply illustrates how utterly worthless the press truly are. Except, of course, as excellent public relations specialists for plutocrats. These days it seems like the only outlet doing anything approaching serious journalism is *Rolling Stone*. As to what it says about American society and journalism that you have to wade through cover photos of Lady Gaga’s full-on unclad posterior to find out the lies our government is telling us, well, I’ll leave that to you.

But clearly the neutering of the obedient profit-motivated media has worked spectacularly. One of the key fronts in this class warfare conducted by the wealthy in America has been with respect to framing. For three decades now, all we’ve heard is how government is a screw-up and how heroically efficient are the captains of industry in the private sector. The way regressives trash our own government in a democracy would certainly have seemed traitorous in another day. Just imagine if you said the same things about the military, which seems to miraculously escape the right’s attention as the biggest and most famously wasteful government bureaucracy of all. Moreover, looking back over Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, not just a small bit of the curtain has been pulled back from the notion of the military’s supposed infallibility. It’s been two-thirds of a century since the United States won a big war against a serious adversary, and even then the Russians did the heavy lifting, at least in Europe. Somehow we never hear much about big, incompetent government in that context, though.

But, hey, forgive my little flight into logical analysis there. We really cannot have that in these times. For a minute there, I forgot to forget. It won’t happen again, Mr. O’Brien, I assure you. From now on, up is down, black is white, war is peace, government is bad and corporations are purveyors of Happy Meals (happy, that is, unless you happen to be a cow, like having small businesses around, have a problem with obesity, don’t want your planet to catch fire, or object to the creation of massive great lakes full of animal waste). Yep, big business is good! That’s why we need to apologize to BP for our government “shaking them down” and forcing them to be slightly-barely-kinda-nominally-sorta responsible for their ecological and economic epic disaster in the Gulf. Get it?

But the other sad truth is that, at the bottom of this roll call of nefarious predators – under every Cheney and Obama and Brian Williams and Lloyd Blankfein doing (his green) god’s work, is a great big stinking pile of yahoos better known as “Us”. We’ll vote Republican this fall because we utterly lack the intellectual curiosity to investigate other options. We’ll

vote Republican because we're greedy and lazy and willing to step on anyone's throat to get our little slice of prosperity back. We'll vote Republican as if we weren't only two years ago just absolutely counting down every second until the previous government packed up and left town. You know, the er, uh, Republicans.

But I have just one question for my fellow Americans before they step into that voting booth. The truth is that what ails us now is exactly what y'all have been voting for over the last three decades. The truth is that if you vote Republican in November it will all only get worse. The truth is that you're living the regressive dream just now, right as we speak.

We've let corporations run wild. We've decimated the government whose function it was to regulate them in the public's interest. We've shifted a very large pile of your money into the hands of the richest one percent of us, and given you and your kids loads of government debt to pay off in exchange. We've shipped your job off to China or India. We've completely immunized all branches of your government from any form of influence other than from rapacious plutocrats.

So my question is, fellow Americans, now that we've all had a nice heaping helping of what regressive politics means for us real people down here below the stratosphere, "How's that recessioney, oily thing working out for ya?"

Eh?

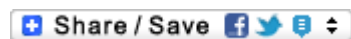
David Michael Green is a professor of political science at Hofstra University in New York. He is delighted to receive readers' reactions to his articles (mailto:dmg@regressiveantidote.net), but regrets that time constraints do not always allow him to respond. More of his work can be found at his website, [The Regressive Antidote](#).

Growing Up Globally

by David Michael Green [article link](#)

July 10, 2010 | CommonDreams

CommonDreams [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:56 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, July 9, 2010

[Violence Begets Violence Until Someone Says Enough, Stop !!](#)

MM Book 1 Chapter 3-16

Genocide: a problem from hell, a creation of it [the eradication of the other, an absolute negation] – “genocide” word origin 1944, in answer to Churchill’s “we are in the presence of a crime without a name” – the penalty, cost for “bystanding” must be increased: we have a moral obligation to stop genocide, to intervene even in the face of adversity – our selfish interests should not come into consideration, our “national and self-prejudices” must be overcome [the slow death of non-systemic, expendable humanity, and of our humanity defines "genocide" also (between 30-50 million needless deaths per year worldwide: deaths of poverty, preventable disease, pollution, conflict, etc., 20,000 die of chronic malnutrition alone, each-and-every day, that's over seven million deaths every year)]; the genocidal politico-business systemic that enables our selfishness, that enforces and excuses it, even expects and demands it !! – this world must be stopped; war is murder, you cannot legalize it, war is criminal, especially war as excuse; WE HAVE NO RIGHT !! – we are a war society, our whole systemic-being is adversarial, every aspect of “our”-selves !! – MONEY IS THE DEVIL’S WEAPON, OUR FALSE GOD, and we bow down to it every moment of our lives; it is our excuse, selfishness manifested; we are immersed in the evil, we wallow in the filth; we don’t grasp it, it grasps us, holds us; the store is open 24/7 and we are satiated !! — this is all we know, we need a new teacher [Christ]; words of blood and thunder or the Word of God, a still, small voice – our lives are in each other, we *are* each other; WE DO NOT EXIST ALONE !! – WE MUST OVERCOME; IT IS NOT A MATTER OF BRAVERY, WE HAVE NO CHOICE – WE WILL CEASE TO EXIST OTHERWISE !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 3-19

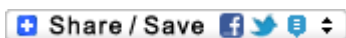
WAR ***IS*** TERRORISM, a “war on terrorism” is a contradiction, and belies our spiritual illness: fighting terror with terror reduces man-kind to beasts without conscience, lashing out in the/our darkness !! – war is a taking, it cannot “give” peace [as result], especially if sought “as lie” by a weaponizing of excuse or opportunity: THOSE WHO TAKE, WAR !! – the absence of external conflict is NOT evidence of peace; engendered hatred remains, held within: OUR GOD(-ing) IS PEACE, there is NO other definition !! – war in the service of privilege and claim; asking God to guard the troops while conducting war [a crime ***against*** God] is to ask amiss; GOD WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN, OR SUPPORT, OUR SINS [deicide in the cause of Mammon] !! – those who conduct war [and those complicit] will be taken in war !! — the Word of God is NOT a “Sword of Conquest” to be wielded in the selfish hands of mankind; God’s “conquest” is a conquest of love NOT war and death !! – [Isa 1:4-5 "sinful nation ... the ***whole*** head is sick ..."] !! — every war, every conflict is about us, no matter where it is, or whom is involved: HUMAN FAMILY !! – the ***excuse*** of the other “forcing our hand” into striking, violence/war, criminal acts is exactly that, an excuse; THERE IS ***NO*** EXCUSE FOR EVIL !! – our awareness of complicity demands our repentance; our “false” family is sacrificing its members: **** FRATRICIDE **** [the crime of “murdering” a brother] and DEICIDE [putting Christ to death; His Way of Love] !! — the systemic APOTHEOSIS [n. of God; deification; consecration]: the Bush/Obama Admin., National Interest, etc., demanding sacrifice; AMERICA USED AS IDOL, “GOD BLESS AMERICA” !! – “America” (the people, their hopes and dreams) used as “divine sanction” by the Nation-State (US Inc.) to enslave the very same !! – America ceased in “being” many decades ago, usurped and misrepresented by the “State”.

MM Book 1 Chapter 3-20

WAR IS ***NOT*** MORALLY JUST; lack of morality “builds” war – traditional Christian “Just War Theory”, “just cause” determinations, sense of “imminent threat”, “social [corporate] obligations”, etc., all ***excuse*** mass slaughter in the cause of group selfishness – WAR IS BUILT, DEVELOPED – the US/UK seen as the “messianic” nation(s), in God’s service [generally held public view]; WAR IS ***NOT*** AN AGENCY OF GOD, MAN DOES ***NOT*** HAVE JUST AUTHORITY TO WAR !! – God is NOT (self)propaganda, GOD IS TRUTH; developed sin, imposed evil must be overcome by good !! – AGAPE TRUTH, PURE MOTIVE vs. self-serving propaganda of any variant; the LIE told, claimed for benefit/deception; even God’s Word taken/used for LIES !! – using Christ [in vain (in self)], and “being and doing” Christ are NOT the same !! — WAR IS BIG BUSINESS [business is war; cause/effect; resultant] !! — OUR COLLECTIVE SINS/EVIL MUST BE LAID BARE, REALIZED AND REPENTED OF, WE MUST (RE)TURN TO GOD !! — State imposed legality is NOT God’s legality !! — war does NOT ennoble a generation, it does NOT give it meaning; violence is NOT a means of communication; WAR IS NOT ENDURING, ONLY LOVE IS ENDURING !! – war “media” is complicit in the myth making, the excuses for dehumanization: human beings turned into objects – the CARNAL LUST OF/FOR WAR vs. the ***ugly*** truth about ourselves: WAR IS ORGANIZED DEATH !! – WAR DOES NOT UNIFY, IT DOES NOT GIVE US VALUES vs. State exaltation, heroic idolation – WAR ***PERVERTS*** SOCIETY AND INDIVIDUALS: PATRIOTISM IS SELF-GLORIFICATION, IT IS PREJUDICE vs. THE OTHER – WAR IS ***NOT*** SELF-PRESERVATION, IT IS SUICIDE !! – VIOLENCE BEGETS VIOLENCE UNTIL SOMEONE SAYS ENOUGH, STOP !! – the COURAGE of FORGIVENESS, a GOD-LEVEL AWARENESS is evidenced when the “strongest” surrenders to PEACE !!

Mammon or Messiah Book 1 Chapter 3 [web page](#) (widescreen)

Mammon or Messiah Book 1 [blog home](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:50 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Camillo "Mac" Bica: We Who Advocate Peace

We Who Advocate Peace

by Camillo "Mac" Bica [article link](#)

July 9, 2010 | OpEdNews

They wage preemptive war, occupy and bomb sovereign nations, utilize video-game technology and robotics to murder and then dehumanize hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children as collateral damage. We who advocate peace and justice say that such acts of war and occupation are illegal, immoral and a barbaric and paranoid response to contrived evil . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They chose to avoid military service themselves or had "other priorities" when their Country called, but yet cavalierly send our children, not theirs, to kill and to die in their war for oil and empire. We who advocate peace and justice say that if the threat is real and the peril immanent and grave, then our chickenhawk leaders and their privileged children should be the first to go. Only then will we follow . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They continue to use the fear of terrorism, prey upon the anxiety and distress of the American people post 9/11 to "justify" continuing, even escalating, their wars and occupations, and to deny fundamental human liberties guaranteed by the Constitution. We who advocate peace and justice say that the exploitation of a vulnerable citizenry, and the disregard and abuse of basic human rights is Un-American, uncivilized, and a clear violation of the very values they allege to be championing and defending . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They send our military into harm's way to kill and be killed in pursuit of goals that are ambiguous and ill-defined in an endless war and occupation they sell to the American people and to the world as a response to terrorism. We who advocate peace and justice say that our troops are not cannon fodder; that terrorism is a tactic not an enemy or an ideology; that war, occupation, and the indiscriminate use of violence by the military promotes rather than abrogates the terrorist threat . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They fail to honor their commitment to our Servicemen and Women, "stop loss" deployment after deployment with insufficient dwell time, and provide inadequate resources to meet the medical and readjustment needs of our returning wounded and veterans. We who advocate peace and justice say that providing effective care and treatment for those physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually wounded by war is a moral and legal obligation and should be our first priority. . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They torture prisoners at Abu Graib, Guantanamo Bay and "black site" secret prisons around the world, denying "detainees" even the most basic right of Habeas Corpus. We who advocate peace and justice say that such heinous practices as water boarding and unlawful restraint are immoral, violates the U.S. Constitution and International Law, increases the risk that our troops will be ill-treated and tortured should they be captured, and that those who ordered, endorsed, sanctioned, or supported such methods of torture are hypocrites, deviants, and war criminals . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They refused to meet with and comfort the families of our soldiers wounded or killed in battle, denigrate their memory, sacrifice, and dignity by fabricating heroic fantasies of their death and suffering to increase recruitment and bolster support for their senseless war. We who advocate peace and justice say that exploiting the deaths of our soldiers and the grief and suffering of their families in order to mythologize war and lure other young men and women to slaughter is unconscionable and depraved . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They have and continue to award no-bid contracts to favored corporations for personal and political benefit. Contractors who kill without mercy or accountability, whose greed for profit influences decisions of foreign policy, promotes war, and prolongs quagmire. We who advocate peace and justice say that we must heed President Eisenhower's warning to beware of the military industrial complex, that such corporate cronyism, war profiteering, and political corruption, is criminal, fiscally unsound, and not in our national interest . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They sell America to foreign investors, waste billions of taxpayer dollars on an ever increasing military budget to wage illegal war and occupation and to furnish the weapons of genocide and oppression to dictators and rogue nations around the world. We who advocate peace and justice say that America must end its preoccupation with militarism and war, use its wealth and influence to protect life and property rather than to kill and to destroy, and become a sane and compassionate voice for peaceful coexistence in the world . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They continue to give tax breaks to the wealthy and tax incentives to the oil industry despite record profits. They bail out corrupt Wall Street bankers but remain apathetic to Main Street workers who lose their jobs and their homes. They "compromised" away meaningful healthcare reform and see fiscal responsibility as cutting social programs such as aid to education, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. We who advocate peace and justice say that benefiting the affluent at the expense of the poor and the middle class is inhumane, short sighted, a violation of trust, and of basic human decency. . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

On "National Holidays" such as Memorial Day and the Fourth of July, they parade, stage air shows, weapons displays, and celebrate the technology of death and destruction to commercialize patriotism and to glorify war and the military experience. We who advocate peace and justice say that these national holidays are not for celebration, commercial marketing, or deceptive recruitment practices. Rather they are for remembering and for grieving the loss of ALL who were sacrificed to the tragedy and insanity of war . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They refuse to "look back" and to investigate the crimes of those who violated the law and the trust of the American people by choosing war unnecessarily; crimes against humanity that cost billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of human lives. We who advocate peace and justice say that we are a nation of laws to which all are subject equally, that such crimes must be investigated and the guilty held accountable for their transgressions. Prosecute the war criminals! . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They sat idly by as the city of New Orleans and thousands of its inhabitants died; ignore global warming, choosing rhetoric rather than effective action while the gas and petroleum industry continues to profit from polluting the planet and destroying its fragile ecosystem. We who advocate peace and justice say that this indifference to human pain and suffering and failure to defend the planet and its diverse species against ecoterrorism is unconscionable, inexcusable, and ultimately suicidal . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

They spout the meaningless rhetoric of shallow patriotism, arrogantly waving the flag of "freedom" or pasting it to the bumper of their gas guzzling humvees, and think it belongs solely to those who unquestioningly beat the drums of war, from a safe distance of course, while their leaders sacrifice lives and treasure and violate the laws of god and of humankind in mistaken wars of choice and greed. We who advocate peace say that all war is anathema and unnecessary war sacrilege and those leaders who dare unleash its horror upon humankind are criminals and those who blindly follow are sheep who fail to understand the moral and legal obligations of their religion, of humanism, and of citizenship in a democracy . . . and they say we are unpatriotic, treasonous, and unsupportive of the troops.

On the Duty to Conscientiously Object

by Camillo "Mac" Bica [article link](#)

March 27, 2010 | OpEdNews

Moral values and norms are the means through which we define ourselves as persons, structure our world, and render our relationship to it, and to other human beings, comprehensible. That is, moral values and norms provide the parameters of our being - - what I term our "moral identity." I submit that the moral principle of *respect for persons* is foundational to any reasonable normative ethical system. It is clear to me that if we do not respect and value persons, then respect for anything else we may hold "sacred," whether it is property, country, the flag, etc., loses all meaning. Morality requires, therefore, that we treat all persons as ends in themselves, not as a means to the ends of others; that all persons have intrinsic moral value, not instrumental value only. This principle is manifest as maintaining that all human beings have inalienable human rights, and correlative to these rights are the obligations of all moral agents to respect and not to violate them. It is clear to me as

well that adhering to this rule, this principle, as foundational, will bring the greatest balance of good (benefit) over evil (detriment or harm) into the world for the greatest number of people. So in a sense, then, this principle is not only *Kantian*, but *Rule Utilitarian* as well.

Unless one is an anarchist, since we choose to live in community with others, we must recognize the prima facie authority of the political structure within the state to make decisions about policy and actions that must be taken in behalf of the body politic. Further, when such decisions have been made utilizing established political processes, citizens are legally, perhaps even morally, obligated to concede at least a preliminary measure of authority to these decisions; even should they find them disagreeable. We must begin, therefore with a presumption in favor of decisions of state. The authority of the state, however, is not absolute and contingent upon the legality and morality of the particular policy being instituted or course of action being required.

Decisions of state may, in some situations, precipitate a crisis of conscience. Consider for example, a state's decision to wage war. For the pacifist, inalienable human rights and the subsequent immunity afforded by such rights, are absolute and cannot be overridden or forfeited. As war inevitably entails violence and killing, war is never a moral option. Consequently, the pacifist refuses participation arguing that one's moral obligation is absolute and, therefore, trumps/overrides any obligation one may have to the state. While never conceding its power to wage war, nations, including our own, have recognized the significance and accepted the importance of individualism, freedom of conscience, and religious toleration. As such, governments have allowed pacifists a dispensation from having to serve in war by granting them General Conscientious Objector status.

For the non pacifist, however, of whom I am one, moral rules and rights, since they can conflict, are not absolute, but prima facie. That is, under some conditions, rights and immunity can be forfeited rendering the individual liable to be justifiably injured and/or killed in self-defense and war. For the non pacifist, then, should certain very specific criteria be met (henceforth referred to as [just war criteria](#)), a war may be just and killing moral. Since, for the non pacifist, some wars, wars that satisfy the just war criteria, may be morally justifiable, participation in such wars violates no moral principle and ought to provoke no objection of conscience.[i] Consequently, in the absence of a more stringent conflicting moral obligation, non pacifists ought abide by the morally and legally correct and duly arrived at decisions of government, even should they require service in war.

Unfortunately, not all wars that become the policy of governments are just and moral. Wars that fail to satisfy just war criteria; wars of aggression for example, violate the sanctity and inviolability of human life and the [tenets of International Law, Treaties, United States Military law](#), and the principles of morality. Consequently, such wars are both illegal and immoral.

The order to participate in an unjust war and, hence, to kill non liable human beings (innocents) to commit murder is an illegal and immoral order. Consequently, the authority of government to require participation in such a war is forfeit, and citizens, whether they are civilians or members of the military, have no obligation to obey such an order, despite the war being a duly enacted decision of government. The [Nuremburg Principles](#) (pdf) makes this obligation clear.

"[T]he very essence of the [Nuremberg] Charter is that individuals have intentional duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience imposed by the individual state."

In fact, according to morality and law there is an obligation NOT to participate, a duty to refuse, an obligation of Selective Conscientious Objection. In addition, at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, it was further declared that there is a legal obligation to work towards ending unjust wars.

"Anyone with knowledge of illegal activity and an opportunity to do something about it is a potential criminal under International law unless the person takes affirmative measures to prevent commission of the crimes."

Selective Conscientious Objection, then, is the claim by non pacifists first, that a particular war fails to satisfy the just war criteria, second, that it is illegal and immoral, and third, that all moral agents are obligated not to abide by the decisions of government and to refuse to participate in or to support the prosecution of this particular war. Consequently, in an unjust

war, since law and morality are in agreement, there is no conflict between a citizen's moral and legal obligation. Paradoxically, despite the clarity of International, Domestic, and Moral Law regarding illegal and immoral war, few governments, including our own, recognize Selective Conscientious Objection.

Where the General Conscientious Objector, the pacifist, and the Selective Conscientious Objector, the just war theorist, differ is that with the former only sincerity of belief is relevant. But with the latter, in addition to sincerity of belief, *correctness of conscience* is not only relevant but required. That is, conscience is not infallible. There are those, members of the [Westboro Baptist Church](#) comes to mind, who believe sincerely that God hates homosexuals, as well as all members of the military, Catholics, Jews, etc. I will grant them the benefit of the doubt that they are sincere in their beliefs and acting in accordance with their conscience, outrageous and perverted though their behavior it may be. Consequently, since there is a prima facie obligation to abide by just and moral policy determined through accepted means of governance, non pacifists citizens must either participate in war or bear the burden of proof to demonstrate correctness of conscience, that is, establish how/why the war in question is illegal and immoral.

Transparency in government, that is, providing the information necessary to create an informed citizenry, is a requirement in a democracy if government by and for the people is to work successfully. Political leaders, then, must, before waging war, offer a coherent, rational, and valid argument that just war criteria have been satisfied, that is, despite the awfulness of war, killing and destruction is a necessary, just, and moral recourse in this particular situation.

In bringing attention to moral and legal concerns that should be of vital interest to all moral agents, especially to those charged with the responsibilities of governing, the Selective Conscientious Objector is a great asset to the state. That is, the Selective Conscientious Objector is telling us that, in his view, and for these reasons, a particular war has failed to satisfy just war criteria and hence is in violation of International, military, and moral law. Such objections may be correct or incorrect, but either way they ought to be taken seriously by government as they provide an important opportunity to review and re-evaluate the decision to wage war.

However the Supreme Court chooses to interpret, and political and military leaders choose to implement Conscientious Objection, the legal precedent and moral obligation is clear. Consequently, we do not need further legislation recognizing a right to Selective Conscientious Objection because it is already, not only recognized, but required both by law and morality. What is necessary, however, is that governments and the military begin taking these objections seriously. That is, our political and military leaders should welcome the observations and criticisms of the Selective Conscientious Objector as a means either to reaffirm their decision to wage war, or to correct and make retribution for their transgressions or tragic mistakes in policy. A nation that persists in waging unjust, immoral war is a pariah in the international community, a rogue nation, and its leaders, war criminals.

[i] Given the moral gravity of one's actions in war, however, it may well be the case that warriors may still suffer "moral injury." See my "The Moral Casualties of War: Understanding the Experience," *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*, v.13:1, Spring 1999, p 81.

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William Astore: Seven Reasons Why We Can't Stop Making War

Tomgram: William Astore, Operation Enduring War

By William Astore [article link](#)

July 8, 2010 | TomDispatch

[**Note for TomDispatch readers:** My offer of a signed copy of my new book, [The American Way of War: How Bush's Wars Became Obama's](#), in return for a contribution of \$75 or more resulted in a remarkable outburst of generosity on your part. Believe me, you're helping TD thrive in a tough economic environment. Here's a last-chance offer to any stragglers. I'll still be signing books for any contributions that arrive by the end of Tuesday, July 13th. After that, the offer will be history! Tom]

Some words have a way of enduring. Take “endure.” As the Bush administration headed into Iraq in the spring of 2003, the Pentagon [already had plans](#) on the drawing board to build at least four gigantic American bases in that country and garrison them for the long haul. But when questioned on the subject, administration officials and spokespeople were [eager to avoid](#) linking the word “permanent” to those as-yet-unbuilt bases and so, for a while, referred to them instead as [“enduring camps.”](#) a phrase that had a certain charm and none of the ominous overtones of “permanent base.” In the end, of course, more than four massive bases [were built](#) and garrisoned. Given the slow American drawdown in that country, their fate remains unknown -- and typically undiscussed in the U.S. -- but as of this moment, they still “endure” and, huge as they are, they couldn't look more permanent.

According to an agreement signed at the end of George W. Bush's second term, all American “combat troops” are to be withdrawn from Iraq by this August, hence the U.S. military is planning to [relabel](#) any post-August “combat operations” as “stability operations.” Think of that as linguistic “endurance.” In the same spirit, all U.S. troops are supposed to be out of Iraq by the end of 2011, but as Tim Arango of the New York Times [noted recently](#), “[F]ew believe that America's military involvement in Iraq will end then. The conventional wisdom among military officers, diplomats, and Iraqi officials is that after a new government is formed, talks will begin about a longer-term American troop presence. 'I like to say that in Iraq, the only thing Americans know for certain, is that we know nothing for certain,' said Brett H. McGurk, a former National Security Council official in Iraq and current fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. 'The exception is what's coming once there's a new government: they will ask to amend the Security Agreement and extend the 2011 date. We should take that request seriously.'”

There is, in other words, a well-based possibility -- or at least [serious American dreaming](#) -- that our mega-installations in Iraq (including our nearly [three-quarters-of-a-billion-dollar](#) citadel of an embassy in the heart of Baghdad that takes [more than \\$1.5 billion a year](#) to run and has [1,800](#) private security guards) will endure.

Now, hop a couple of thousand miles to another war, Afghanistan, and a [newly appointed war commander](#) testifying before the Senate in his confirmation hearings. Responding to questions about President Obama's previously announced decision to begin some kind of an American drawdown there in July 2011, General David Petraeus spent much time playing down the significance of that date (as did [the president](#)). He even brought up the possibility that the date could be [delayed](#). In the process, choosing his words with care, he said this: “It is important to note the President's reminder in recent days that July 2011 will mark the beginning of a process, not the date when the U.S. heads for the exits and turns out the lights. As he explained this past Sunday, in fact, 'we'll need to provide assistance to Afghanistan for a long time to come...' Moreover, as President Karzai has recognized, and as a number of allied leaders noted at the recent G-20 Summit, it is going to be a number of years before Afghan forces can truly handle the security tasks in Afghanistan on their own. The commitment to Afghanistan is necessarily, therefore, an enduring one, and neither the Taliban nor our Afghan and Pakistani partners should doubt that.” Given the history of America's recent wars, that “enduring” couldn't represent a more ominous choice of words.

Retired Lieutenant Colonel and [TomDispatch regular](#) William Astore takes a look at the single most “enduring” aspect of the American military scene in our time, our persistent war-making -- and the war preparations that go with it. Tom

Hope and Change Fade, but War Endures

Seven Reasons Why We Can't Stop Making War

By [William J. Astore](#)

If one quality characterizes our wars today, it's their endurance. They never seem to end. Though war itself may not be an American inevitability, these days many factors combine to make [constant war](#) an American near certainty. Put metaphorically, our nation's pursuit of war taps so many wellsprings of our behavior that a concerted effort to cap it would dwarf BP's efforts in the Gulf of Mexico.

Our political leaders, the media, and the military interpret enduring war as a measure of our national fitness, our global power, our grit in the face of eternal danger, and our seriousness. A desire to de-escalate and withdraw, on the other hand, is invariably seen as cut-and-run appeasement and discounted as weakness. Withdrawal options are, in a pet phrase of Washington elites, invariably "off the table" when global policy is at stake, as was true during the Obama administration's full-scale reconsideration of the Afghan war in the fall of 2009. Viewed in this light, the president's ultimate decision to surge in Afghanistan was not only predictable, but the only course considered suitable for an American war leader. Rather than the tough choice, it was the path of least resistance.

Why do our elites so readily and regularly give war, not peace, a chance? What exactly are the wellsprings of Washington's (and America's) behavior when it comes to war and preparations for more of the same?

Consider these seven:

1. We wage war because we think we're good at it -- and because, at a gut level, we've come to believe that [American wars](#) can bring good to others (hence our feel-good names for them, like Operations [Enduring Freedom](#) and [Iraqi Freedom](#)). Most Americans are not only convinced we have the best troops, the best training, and the most advanced weapons, but also the purest motives. Unlike the bad guys and the barbarians out there in the global marketplace of death, our warriors [and warfighters](#) are seen as gift-givers and freedom-bringers, [not as death-dealers](#) and resource-exploiters. Our [illusions](#) about the military we "support" serve as catalyst for, and apology for, the persistent war-making we condone.
2. We wage war because we've already devoted so many of our resources to it. It's what we're most prepared to do. [More than half](#) of discretionary federal spending goes to fund our military and its war making or war preparations. The military-industrial complex is a well-oiled, extremely profitable machine and the armed forces, our favorite child, the one we've lavished the most resources and praise upon. It's natural to give your favorite child free rein.
3. We've managed to isolate war's physical and emotional costs, leaving them on the shoulders of a tiny minority of Americans. By eliminating the draft and relying ever more on for-profit [private military contractors](#), we've made war a [distant abstraction](#) for most Americans, who can choose to consume it as spectacle or simply tune it out as so much background noise.
4. While war and its costs have, to date, been kept at arm's length, American society has been militarizing fast. Our media outlets, intelligence agencies, politicians, foreign policy establishment, and "homeland security" bureaucracy are so intertwined with military priorities and agendas as to be inseparable from them. In [militarized America](#), griping about soft-hearted tactics or the [outspokenness](#) of a certain general may be tolerated, but forceful criticism of our military or our wars is still treated as deviant and "un-American."
5. Our profligate, high-tech approach to war, including those Predator and Reaper drones armed with Hellfire missiles, has served to limit American casualties -- and so has limited the anger over, and harsh questioning of, our wars that might go with them. While the U.S. has had more than 1,000 troops killed in Afghanistan, over a similar period in Vietnam we lost more than 58,000 troops. Improved medical evacuation and trauma care, greater reliance on standoff precision weaponry and similar "force multipliers," stronger emphasis on "force protection" within American military units: all these and more have helped tamp down concern about the immeasurable and soaring costs of our wars.
6. As we incessantly develop those force-multiplying weapons to give us our "edge" (though never an edge that leads to victory), it's hardly surprising that the U.S. has come to [dominate](#), if not quite monopolize, the global arms trade. In these

years, as American jobs were outsourced or simply disappeared in the Great Recession, armaments have been one of our few growth industries. Endless war has proven endlessly profitable -- not perhaps for all of us, but certainly for those in the business of war.

7. And don't forget the seductive power of [beyond-worse-case](#), doomsday scenarios, of the prophecies of pundits and so-called experts, who regularly tell us that, bad as our wars may be, doing anything to end them would be far worse. A typical scenario goes like this: If we withdraw from Afghanistan, the government of Hamid Karzai will collapse, the Taliban will surge to victory, al-Qaeda will pour into Afghan safe havens, and Pakistan will be further destabilized, its atomic bombs falling into the hands of terrorists out to destroy Peoria and Orlando.

Such fevered nightmares, impossible to disprove, may be conjured at any moment to scare critics into silence. They are a convenient bogeyman, leaving us cowering as we send our superman military out to save us (and the world as well), while preserving our right to [visit the mall](#) and travel to Disney World without being nuked.

The truth is that no one really knows what would happen if the U.S. disengaged from Afghanistan. But we do know what's happening now, with us fully engaged: we're pursuing a war that's costing us [nearly \\$7 billion](#) a month that we're not winning (and that's arguably unwinnable), a war that may be increasing the chances of another 9/11, rather than decreasing them.

Capping the Wellsprings of War

Each one of these seven wellsprings feeding our enduring wars must be capped. So here are seven suggestions for the sort of "caps" -- hopefully more effective than BP's flailing improvisations -- we need to install:

1. Let's reject the idea that war is either admirable or good -- and in the process, remind ourselves that others often see us as "the foreign fighters" and profligate war consumers who kill innocents (despite our efforts to apply deadly force in surgically precise ways reflecting "[courageous restraint](#)").
2. Let's cut defense spending now, and reduce the global "mission" that goes with it. Set a reasonable goal -- a 6-8% reduction annually for the next 10 years, until levels of defense spending are at least back to where they were before 9/11 -- and then stick to it.
3. Let's stop privatizing war. Creating ever more profitable incentives for war was always a ludicrous idea. It's time to make war a non-profit, last-resort activity. And let's revive national service (including elective military service) for all young adults. What we need is a revived civilian conservation corps, not a [new civilian "expeditionary" force](#).
4. Let's reverse the militarization of so many dimensions of our society. To cite one example, it's time to [empower](#) truly independent (non-embedded) journalists to cover our wars, and stop relying on retired generals and admirals who led our previous wars to be our media guides. Men who are beholden to their former service branch or the current defense contractor who employs them can hardly be trusted to be critical and unbiased guides to future conflicts.
5. Let's recognize that expensive high-tech weapons systems are not war-winners. They've kept us in the game without yielding decisive results -- unless you measure "results" in terms of [cost overruns](#) and [burgeoning federal budget deficits](#).
6. Let's retool our economy and reinvest our money, moving it out of the military-industrial complex and into strengthening our anemic system of mass transit, our crumbling infrastructure, and alternative energy technology. We need high-speed rail, safer roads and bridges, and more wind turbines, not more overpriced jet fighters.
7. Finally, let's banish nightmare scenarios from our minds. The world is scary enough without forever imagining smoking guns morphing into mushroom clouds.

There you have it: my seven "caps" to contain our gushing support for permanent war. No one said it would be easy. Just ask BP how easy it is to cap one out-of-control gusher.

Nonetheless, if we as a society aren't willing to work hard for actual change -- indeed, to demand it -- we'll be on that military escalatory curve until we implode. And that way madness lies.

William J. Astore is a retired lieutenant colonel (USAF) and [TomDispatch regular](#). He has taught at the Air Force Academy and the Naval Postgraduate School and currently teaches History at the Pennsylvania College of Technology. He may be reached at wjastore@gmail.com.

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Friday, July 9, 2010

Melvin A. Goodman: The Military-Industrial Complex's Win

The Military-Industrial Complex's Win, Part II

by: Melvin A. Goodman [article link](#) [article link](#)

07 July 2010 | Consortium News | t r u t h o u t

Editor's Note: This is Part II of a series by former CIA analyst Melvin A. Goodman addressing the presidency and the Pentagon.

Part I examined what President Dwight Eisenhower knew about the military as a retired five-star general and what he tried to impart to his successors. Part III will deal with President Obama's mishandling of the military-industrial complex's power and what he should do:

Barack Obama's crippling inheritance as President of the United States is the near-five-decade failure of the nation's political leadership to heed President Dwight D. Eisenhower's warning that "in the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex."

This complex, according to Tom Barry of the Center for International Policy, has now "morphed into a new type of public-private partnership — one that spans military, intelligence, and homeland-security contracting — that amounts to a 'national security complex'."

Over the past three decades, despite the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, U.S. presidents have done next to nothing to challenge or limit the national security complex, which continues to drain the federal treasury and block any potential political threat to the military-industrial status quo.

Through this period, reaching from Ronald Reagan to Obama, military spending has continued to increase, with the United States outspending the entire rest of the world on weapons systems.

The \$708 billion defense budget for 2011 is higher than at any point in America's post-World War II history. It is 16 percent higher than the 1952 Korean War budget peak and 36 percent higher than the 1968 Vietnam War budget peak in constant dollars.

Yet some Pentagon leaders see this spending level as restraint. Defense Secretary Robert Gates argues that the budget plan "rebalances" spending by emphasizing near-term challenges of counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, and stabilization operations.

But the current budget plan makes no effort at prioritizing these near-term commitments against funding for long-term commitments. Instead, it increases funding for both near-term and long-term programs. Despite complaints from deficit hawks, the military-industrial hawks still rule the roost.

Overall procurement spending will rise by nearly 8 percent in the 2011 budget, covering virtually all of the equipment the services wanted. Historically, the costs to operate and maintain the U.S. military tend to grow at about 2.5 percent. Not this year. The basic defense budget request seeks more than \$200 billion, or an 8.5 percent increase, in funding for Operations and Maintenance.

Over the past three decades, the military tool also has become the leading instrument of American statecraft. The defense budget is 13 times larger than all U.S. civilian foreign policy budgets combined, and the Defense Department's share of U.S. security assistance has grown from 6 percent in 2002 to more than 50 percent in 2009, when Obama was inaugurated.

There are more members of the military in marching bands than there are Foreign Service Officers, and the Defense Department spends more on fuel (\$16 billion) than the State Department spends on operating costs (\$13 billion). More than half of U.S. discretionary spending is in the defense budget, and war spending only accounts for half of the increase in defense spending since 1998.

All at Fault

All U.S. presidents since 1981 have contributed to the militarization of national security policy.

President Ronald Reagan was responsible for unprecedented peacetime increases in defense spending even though the Soviet Union was in decline; he also endorsed the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986 that enhanced the political role of the regional commanders-in-chief (CINCs) and marginalized the State Department.

President George H.W. Bush's deployment of 26,000 troops (Operation Just Cause) to Panama only one month after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, indicated that the use of force would play a greater role in the new international environment, which Bush dubbed "the new world order."

President Bill Clinton weakened the role of the State Department in implementing foreign policy, when he abolished the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the United States Information Agency and substantially reduced funding for the Agency for International Development.

Clinton became the first president in three decades to fail to stand up to the Pentagon on arms control, when he was unwilling to challenge the military's opposition to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

President George W. Bush ushered in the doctrine of preemptive war in Iraq and, by declaring a counterproductive "war on terror," assured that the Pentagon would be the leading policy agency in combating terrorism around the world. Bush's policies of unilateralism, proclaimed at West Point in 2002, marked a radical revolution in American foreign policy.

President Bush ineffectually relied on saber-rattling against the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea. While doing so, he abrogated the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the cornerstone of deterrence since 1972, and funded a national missile defense system that is not workable but remains the largest line item for a weapons system in the current defense budget.

The Bush administration was also responsible for militarizing (and further politicizing) the intelligence community, which reached its nadir in 2002 when the CIA prepared a phony National Intelligence Estimate to justify the war against Iraq.

The attacks on 9/11 and the declaration of "the war on terror" brought a new dimension to the national security state: the formation of largely unaccountable security contractors, such as Blackwater, without any code of conduct, and various consulting agencies that act as intermediaries between the federal government and the defense contractors.

The illegalities of Blackwater (now called Xe) are well known and, thanks to Tom Barry, we have a better understanding of the consulting agencies managed by former high-level officials of the Bush administration, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, national security adviser Stephen Hadley, directors of homeland security Michael Chertoff and Tom Ridge, and CIA director Michael Hayden.

Nearly a quarter of the federal budget is devoted to contracts to the private sector, with the new Department of Homeland Security and Office of National Intelligence serving as conduits for this money.

Private contracts are now responsible for 70 percent of the intelligence budget, and private contractors represent more than half of the employees of the new National Counterterrorism Center. The trumpeting of "cyber war" marks the next cash cow for the defense industry.

Pentagon's Leverage

In addition to unprecedented military spending, the Pentagon has gained increased leverage over the \$70 billion intelligence community as well as increased influence over the national security and foreign policies of the United States.

With the State Department and the CIA in decline, the Pentagon's role in intelligence, nation building, and Third World assistance grows significantly. Congressional armed services committees have become sounding boards for the Pentagon, and the increased absence of military experience on the part of congressional representatives contributes to less oversight.

Recent presidents also have retreated from the principle of meaningful civilian control over military policy. George W. Bush, for instance, identified the chief lesson from the Vietnam War as the need to avoid interference from politicians in Washington with the military commanders on the ground.

As for Obama, while deliberating whether to escalate the war in Afghanistan, he allowed himself to be blindsided by the self-serving leak of Gen. Stanley McChrystal's recommendation for more troops, a policy also pushed by Gen. David Petraeus and one that Obama ultimately bowed to.

President Eisenhower's warning about the military-industrial complex and the need for commanders-in-chief who actually understood – and knew how to resist – the Pentagon's clarion calls have never been more germane.

In addition to inheriting two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, President Obama inherited the so-called war on terror, particularly the psychology of that war, which promised a never-ending struggle against faceless Muslim insurgents and Islamic fundamentalists around the world.

This psychology has led to a decade of wireless wiretapping, the abrogation of habeas corpus, torture and abuse, and an atmosphere of fear and anxiety, which have combined to make us less secure.

With a justice system that defers to the national security state, a compliant Congress all but dysfunctional, and a corporate media abandoning its watchdog role, there has been little consistent criticism of the illegal excesses of the national security state.

In the wake of 9/11, Bush brandished a belief in the necessity of American hegemony and turned increasingly to the Pentagon to enforce this global "full-spectrum dominance."

By the time of Obama's election in 2008, the United States was alienated from much of the world – and the new President faced a difficult choice: either chart a dramatically new (and surely harrowing) course or accept a subservient place within the entrenched military-industrial complex.

Note: This is Part II of a series by former CIA analyst Melvin A. Goodman addressing the presidency and the Pentagon.

Part I examined what President Dwight Eisenhower knew about the military as a retired five-star general and what he tried to impart to his successors. Part III will deal with President Obama's mishandling of the military-industrial complex's power and what he should do.

Melvin A. Goodman, a senior fellow at the [Center for International Policy](#) and adjunct professor of government at Johns Hopkins University, spent 42 years with the CIA, the National War College, and the U.S. Army. His latest book is [Failure of Intelligence: The Decline and Fall of the CIA](#).

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Melvin A. Goodman: What Eisenhower Could Teach Obama

What Eisenhower Could Teach Obama, Part I

by: Melvin A. Goodman [article link](#) [article link](#)

05 July 2010 | Consortium News | t r u t h o u t

Editor's Note: This is Part I of a series by former CIA analyst Melvin A. Goodman addressing the presidency and the Pentagon.

Part II will deal with President Obama's difficult inheritance of two wars in addition to a war on terrorism as well as the legacy of presidents who contributed to the militarization of national security policy. Part III will deal with President Obama's mishandling of this inheritance and what the Obama administration needs to do to reverse the situation:

Fifty years ago, President Dwight D. Eisenhower told his senior advisers in the Oval Office of the White House, "God help this country when someone sits in this chair who doesn't know the military as well as I do." Several months later, he issued his famous warning about the military-industrial complex.

Now the United States finds itself in a cul-de-sac, with no way out of increased military deployments and expenditures, and no evidence that President Obama has a firm hand on the national security tiller.

A central problem for the nation is the increased power and influence of the Pentagon over the foreign and national security policies of the United States.

No president since Eisenhower has fully understood the Pentagon's dominant position in military and security policy. Armed with his knowledge and experience as World War II's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, Eisenhower made sure that he could not be outmaneuvered by his military advisers, particularly on such key issues as the Vietnam War and tensions with the Soviet Union.

However, his immediate successors thoroughly bungled the decision-making process. President John F. Kennedy never understood that the Pentagon anticipated the failure of the CIA in Cuba in 1961 and expected to use its air power to finish the job.

President Lyndon B. Johnson knew that Vietnam was a fool's errand but failed to challenge the pleas from the Pentagon for more force and additional troops – or the strategic views of the Rostow and Bundy brothers.

By contrast, Eisenhower ignored the hysteria of the bomber and missile gaps in the 1950s, claimed by Senators Stuart Symington and Kennedy as well as by such key advisors as Paul Nitze.

Nitze had unnecessarily heightened concerns about U.S. security in National Security Council Report 68 (known as NSC-68) in the late 1940s, and he was the chief author of the overwrought Gaither Report, which called for unnecessary increases in the strategic arsenal.

Eisenhower ignored these advocates for increased defense spending and even cut the military budget by 20 percent between 1953 and 1955 on the way to balancing the budget by 1956. Eisenhower started no wars and was willing to settle for a stalemate in ending the Korea War.

Eisenhower clashed with the military mindset from the very beginning of his presidency. He knew that his generals were wrong in proclaiming “political will” as the major factor in military victory.

A five-star general, Eisenhower would have shuddered when four-star General David Petraeus, like so many military commanders of recent decades, proclaimed last week that U.S. political will is the key factor for success in Afghanistan.

How Much is Sufficiency?

Eisenhower knew that military demands for weaponry and resources were always based on inexplicable notions of “sufficiency,” and he made sure that Pentagon briefings on the Hill were countered by testimony from the national security bureaucracy.

Henry A. Kissinger was one of the rare national security advisers and secretaries of state who understood Eisenhower’s point of view.

During the ratification process for the SALT I agreement in 1972, Kissinger countered conservative and military opposition to SALT and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with two questions they could never answer: What is strategic sufficiency? What would we do with strategic sufficiency if we had it?

In his Farewell Address in 1961, Eisenhower warned that the United States should not become a “garrison state,” but nearly 50 years later we have developed a garrison mentality with unprecedented military spending; continuous military deployments; hyped fears about “Islamismo-terrorism” and now cyberwars; and exaggerated aspirations with regard to counterinsurgency and nation-building.

Eisenhower understood that it was the military-industrial complex that fostered an inordinate belief in the omnipotence of American military power. Eisenhower made sure that the Pentagon and the Dulles brothers, who were in command at the State Department and the CIA, respectively, did not over-reach with the U.S. role overseas.

Finally, although Eisenhower signed off on some aggressive, even violent, CIA operations, such as in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, and the Congo in 1960, he did not authorize the more grandiose actions that characterized later presidencies, the likes of Kennedy’s Bay of Pigs; Johnson’s Vietnam; Reagan’s Grenada; Bush II’s Iraq; and now Obama’s Afghanistan.

Eisenhower opposed and reversed the British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt in 1956, and withstood criticism for not assisting the Hungarian uprising weeks later. Thirty years after the fact, President Ronald Reagan joined in criticizing Eisenhower’s restraint regarding Hungary.

With the possible exception of President Richard Nixon, no recent president has understood the military mindset and was willing to limit the military’s influence. Democrats, such as Kennedy, Johnson and Bill Clinton as well as Republicans such as Reagan, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush deferred too readily to the military; devoted too many resources to the military; and often resorted to the use of power instead of diplomacy and statecraft.

Now President Obama has found himself in a position where the military wields far too much influence on Capitol Hill; controls too much of the depleted U.S. Treasury; and has the leading policy voice on both security and diplomatic issues.

Obama proclaims Reinhold Niebuhr as his favorite philosopher. But he would do well to take heed of the philosophy and advice of Eisenhower, who had a far better understanding of America’s infatuation with military power.

Melvin A. Goodman, a senior fellow at the [Center for International Policy](#) and adjunct professor of government at Johns Hopkins University, spent 42 years with the CIA, the National War College, and the U.S. Army. His latest book is [Failure of Intelligence: The Decline and Fall of the CIA](#).

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Thursday, July 8, 2010

[Robert Reich: We're in a Recession Because the Rich Are Raking in an Absurd Portion of Wealth](#)

We're in a Recession Because the Rich Are Raking in an Absurd Portion of Wealth

By Robert Reich [article link](#)

July 7, 2010 | The Nation | AlterNet

Wall Street's banditry was the proximate cause of the Great Recession, not its underlying cause. Even if the Street is better controlled in the future (and I have my doubts), the structural reason for the Great Recession still haunts America. That reason is America's surging inequality.

Consider: in 1928 the richest 1 percent of Americans received 23.9 percent of the nation's total income. After that, the share going to the richest 1 percent steadily declined. New Deal reforms, followed by World War II, the GI Bill and the Great Society expanded the circle of prosperity. By the late 1970s the top 1 percent raked in only 8 to 9 percent of America's total annual income. But after that, inequality began to widen again, and income reconcentrated at the top. By 2007 the richest 1 percent were back to where they were in 1928—with 23.5 percent of the total.

Each of America's two biggest economic crashes occurred in the year immediately following these twin peaks—in 1929 and 2008. This is no mere coincidence. When most of the gains from economic growth go to a small sliver of Americans at the top, the rest don't have enough purchasing power to buy what the economy is capable of producing. America's median wage, adjusted for inflation, has barely budged for decades. Between 2000 and 2007 it actually dropped. Under these circumstances the only way the middle class can boost its purchasing power is to borrow, as it did with gusto. As housing prices rose, Americans turned their homes into ATMs. But such borrowing has its limits. When the debt bubble finally burst, vast numbers of people couldn't pay their bills, and banks couldn't collect.

China, Germany and Japan have surely contributed to the problem by failing to buy as much from us as we buy from them. But to believe that our continuing economic crisis stems mainly from the trade imbalance—we buy too much and save too little, while they do the reverse—is to miss the biggest imbalance of all. The problem isn't that typical Americans have spent beyond their means. It's that their means haven't kept up with what the growing economy could and should have been able to provide them.

A second parallel links 1929 with 2008: when earnings accumulate at the top, people at the top invest their wealth in whatever assets seem most likely to attract other big investors. This causes the prices of certain assets—commodities, stocks, dot-coms or real estate—to become wildly inflated. Such speculative bubbles eventually burst, leaving behind mountains of near-worthless collateral.

The crash of 2008 didn't turn into another Great Depression because the government learned the importance of flooding the market with cash, thereby temporarily rescuing some stranded consumers and most big bankers. But the financial rescue didn't change the economy's underlying structure. Median wages are continuing their downward slide, and those at the top continue to rake in the lion's share of income. That's why the middle class still doesn't have the purchasing power it needs to reboot the economy, and why the so-called recovery will be so tepid—maybe even leading to a double dip. It's also why America will be vulnerable to even larger speculative booms and deeper busts in the years to come.

The structural problem began in the late 1970s, by which time a wave of new technologies (air cargo, container ships and terminals, satellite communications and, later, the Internet) had radically reduced the costs of outsourcing jobs abroad.

Other new technologies (automated machinery, computers and ever more sophisticated software applications) took over many other jobs (remember bank tellers? telephone operators? service station attendants?). By the '80s, any job requiring that the same steps be performed repeatedly was disappearing—going over there or into software. Meanwhile, as the pay of most workers flattened or dropped, the pay of well-connected graduates of prestigious colleges and MBA programs—the so-called "talent" who reached the pinnacles of power in executive suites and on Wall Street—soared.

The puzzle is why so little was done to counteract these forces. Government could have given employees more bargaining power to get higher wages, especially in industries sheltered from global competition and requiring personal service: big-box retail stores, restaurants and hotel chains, and child- and eldercare, for instance. Safety nets could have been enlarged to compensate for increasing anxieties about job loss: unemployment insurance covering part-time work, wage insurance if pay drops, transition assistance to move to new jobs in new locations, insurance for communities that lose a major employer so they can lure other employers. With the gains from economic growth the nation could have provided Medicare for all, better schools, early childhood education, more affordable public universities, more extensive public transportation. And if more money was needed, taxes could have been raised on the rich.

Big, profitable companies could have been barred from laying off a large number of workers all at once, and could have been required to pay severance—say, a year of wages—to anyone they let go. Corporations whose research was subsidized by taxpayers could have been required to create jobs in the United States. The minimum wage could have been linked to inflation. And America's trading partners could have been pushed to establish minimum wages pegged to half their countries' median wages—thereby ensuring that all citizens shared in gains from trade and creating a new global middle class that would buy more of our exports.

But starting in the late 1970s, and with increasing fervor over the next three decades, government did just the opposite. It deregulated and privatized. It increased the cost of public higher education and cut public transportation. It shredded safety nets. It halved the top income tax rate from the range of 70–90 percent that prevailed during the 1950s and '60s to 28–40 percent; it allowed many of the nation's rich to treat their income as capital gains subject to no more than 15 percent tax and escape inheritance taxes altogether. At the same time, America boosted sales and payroll taxes, both of which have taken a bigger chunk out of the pay of the middle class and the poor than of the well-off.

Companies were allowed to slash jobs and wages, cut benefits and shift risks to employees (from you-can-count-on-it pensions to do-it-yourself 401(k)s, from good health coverage to soaring premiums and deductibles). They busted unions and threatened employees who tried to organize. The biggest companies went global with no more loyalty or connection to the United States than a GPS device. Washington deregulated Wall Street while insuring it against major losses, turning finance—which until recently had been the servant of American industry—into its master, demanding short-term profits over long-term growth and raking in an ever larger portion of the nation's profits. And nothing was done to impede CEO salaries from skyrocketing to more than 300 times that of the typical worker (from thirty times during the Great Prosperity of the 1950s and '60s), while the pay of financial executives and traders rose into the stratosphere.

It's too facile to blame Ronald Reagan and his Republican ilk. Democrats have been almost as reluctant to attack inequality or even to recognize it as the central economic and social problem of our age. (As Bill Clinton's labor secretary, I should know.) The reason is simple. As money has risen to the top, so has political power. Politicians are more dependent than ever on big money for their campaigns. Modern Washington is far removed from the Gilded Age, when, it's been said, the lackeys of robber barons literally deposited sacks of cash on the desks of friendly legislators. Today's cash comes in the form of ever increasing campaign donations from corporate executives and Wall Street, their ever bigger platoons of lobbyists and their hordes of PR flacks.

The Great Recession could have spawned another era of fundamental reform, just as the Great Depression did. But the financial rescue reduced immediate demands for broader reform. Obama might still have succeeded had he framed the challenge accurately. Yet in reassuring the public that the economy would return to normal, he missed a key opportunity to expose the longer-term scourge of widening inequality and its dangers. Containing the immediate financial crisis and then claiming the economy was on the mend left the public with a diffuse set of economic problems that seemed unrelated and inexplicable, as if a town's fire chief dealt with a conflagration by protecting the biggest office buildings but leaving smaller

fires simmering all over town: housing foreclosures, job losses, lower earnings, less economic security, soaring pay on Wall Street and in executive suites.

Legislation to improve America's healthcare system illustrates the paradox. Initially, the nation was strongly supportive. But the president and Democratic leaders failed to link healthcare reform to the broader agenda of widely shared prosperity. So as unemployment rose through 2009, the public understandably focused its attention on the loss of jobs and earnings, to which healthcare appeared tangential. Consequently, the nation was not as actively supportive of reform as it needed to be in order to weaken the hold of Big Pharma and private health insurers, who demanded that any so-called reform improve their bottom line. The resulting law is fodder for the right, because it won't adequately control future costs and requires Americans to pay more for health insurance than they would have had the deals not been made.

Much the same has occurred with efforts to reform the financial system. The White House and Democratic leaders could have described the overarching goal as overhauling economic institutions that bestow outsized rewards on a relative few while imposing extraordinary costs and risks on almost everyone else. Instead, they defined the goal narrowly: reducing risks to the financial system caused by particular practices on Wall Street. The solution thereby shriveled to a set of technical fixes for how the Street should conduct its business.

Even the disaster in the Gulf of Mexico could have been put into the larger frame of how giant corporations use their influence to capture regulators and impose risks and costs on the broader public, and the central importance of public health and environmental safety to widespread prosperity. But here again, the administration and Democratic leaders failed to connect the dots. The disaster morphed into a technical question of how to plug the gusher and a policy discussion of how best to regulate deepwater drilling.

If nothing more is done, America's three-decade-long lurch toward widening inequality is an open invitation to a future demagogue who misconnects the dots, blaming immigrants, the poor, government, foreign nations, "socialists" or "intellectual elites" for the growing frustrations of the middle class. The major fault line in American politics will no longer be between Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives. It will be between the "establishment" and an increasingly mad-as-hell populace determined to "take back America" from them. When they understand where this is heading, powerful interests that have so far resisted reform may come to see that the alternative is far worse.

A virtual pendulum underlies the American political economy. We swing from eras in which the benefits of economic growth concentrate in fewer hands to those in which the gains are more broadly shared, and then back again. We are approaching the end of one such cycle and the start of the next. The question is not whether the pendulum will swing back but how it will swing—whether with reforms that widen the circle of prosperity or with demagoguery that turns America away from the rest of the world, shrinks the economy and sets Americans against one another.

None of us can thrive in a nation divided between a small number of people receiving an ever larger share of the nation's income and wealth, and everyone else receiving a declining share. The lopsidedness not only diminishes economic growth but also tears at the social fabric of our society. The most fortunate among us who have reached the pinnacles of economic power and success depend on a stable economic and political system. That stability rests on the public's trust that the system operates in the interest of us all. Any loss of such trust threatens the well-being of everyone. We will choose reform, I believe, because we are a sensible nation, and reform is the only sensible option we have.

Robert B. Reich has served in three national administrations, most recently as secretary of labor under President Bill Clinton. He also served on President Obama's transition advisory board. His latest book is [Supercapitalism](#).

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Wednesday, July 7, 2010

[Stephen Lendman: The Case for War: The Iron Mountain Report](#)

The Case for War: The Iron Mountain Report

By Stephen Lendman [article link](#)

July 7, 2010 | OpEdNews

In his 1966 book, "How the World Really Works," Alan B. Jones included a chapter on the "Report from Iron Mountain: On the Possibility and Desirability of Peace," later published in 1967 by The Dial Press. It became a bestseller, then disappeared. Now few copies are available, but when circulating in the 1960s, it was reported that concerned Johnson administration officials ordered global US embassies to downplay it, saying it had nothing to do with policy. Later accounts doubted the material's authenticity, suggesting it was a hoax. True or false, its findings are reviewed below because they accurately reflect longstanding US policy.

Prepared by unnamed 15-man "Special Study Group, (SSG)" they were commissioned "by some governmental entity which wished to remain unknown" because of the sensitive nature of its assignment, completed after two and a half years work, from August 1963 - March 1966, at a secret Iron Mountain, New York "underground nuclear hideout."

First surfacing in 1961, the idea originated during the Kennedy administration, senior officials Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Dean Rusk, and others, knowing there was no serious plan for peace at a time the president wanted to end the Cold War. An SSG member only identified as "John Doe" revealed it.

Secrecy wasn't mandated, but all members except Doe wanted no public disclosure or discussion of its:

- "Letter of Transmittal (saying Report conclusions and recommendations were unanimous)
- Introduction
- Scope of the Study
- Disarmament and the Economy
- War & Peace as Social Systems
- The Functions of War
- Substitutes for the Functions of War
- Summary and Conclusions (and)
- Recommendations"

Writer Leonard C. Lewin wrote a foreward, referring to a SSG midwest social science professor, identified only as "John Doe" for reasons his task would clarify:

"to determine, accurately and realistically, the nature of the problems that would confront the United States if and when a condition of 'permanent peace' should arrive, and to draft a program for dealing with this contingency."

The Report was suppressed, "both by the Special Study Group itself and by the government INTERAGENCY committee to which it had been submitted. After months of agonizing, Doe" decided to go public.

Group members were carefully chosen for their physical and social sciences expertise, as well as their years of academic, government and/or business experience, qualifying them for their assignment.

In releasing the material, "Doe" said his:

"responsibility to the society for which I am part supersedes any self-assumed obligation on the part of the fifteen individual men....What is needed now, and needed badly, is widespread public discussion and debate about the elements of war and the problems of peace."

Issues addressed included:

- the notion that the "basic authority of a modern state over its people resides in its war powers;"
- world peace would cause "unparalleled and revolutionary" social structure changes;
- disarmament's economic impact;
- far-reaching "political, sociological, cultural, and ecological changes," and two broad questions pertaining to:
- expectations if peace comes; and
- policies to follow if it does.

Other issues included:

- the "real functions of war in modern societies" beyond defending the national interest;
- without war, "what other institutions exist or might be devised to fulfill these functions;"
- the possibility of abolishing war;
- the desirability and repercussions of doing it; and
- possible social system improvements from war-readiness.

Doe hoped for public discussions about "the elements of war and the problems for peace." None followed. Wars persist, and so do Report notions like:

Wars are an economic, political and ecological necessity, important to continue indefinitely. Peace "would almost certainly not be in the best interest of (a) stable society" and might be "catastrophic."

General disarmament would require "scrapping....a critical proportion of the most highly developed occupational specialties in the economy."

Diverting an arms budget to a "non-military system (is) remote (in a) market economy." Replacing it with public works is "wishful thinking (and) unrealistic."

War is "the basic social system, within which other secondary modes of social organization conflict or conspire. (It's) the system (that's) governed most human societies of record, as it (does) today."

No other control mechanism has been devised even close to it in effectiveness.

War-making potential doesn't result from threats. In fact, "threats against the national interest are usually created or accelerated to meet the changing needs of the war system."

Significant nonmilitary functions and benefits of wars were claimed to exist, including economic protections against depression, and stimulus contributing to the rise of gross national product and individual productivity. Nothing else devised "can remotely compare to it in effectiveness." It's the "essential economic stabilizer."

War's political importance is crucial. It defines and enforces relations with other nations. National sovereignty and the traditional nation-state depend on it. The war system is essential to internal political stability. "Without it, no government has ever been able to obtain acquiescence (to) its legitimacy, or right to rule its society."

A nation's authority over its people "resides in its war powers," including local police to deal with "internal enemies in a military manner."

Military service has a patriotic purpose "that must be maintained for its own sake."

Wars also serve an ecological purpose - "to reduce the consuming population to a level consistent with the survival of the species," but mass destruction is inefficient, and nuclear weapons are indiscriminate, removing physically stronger members important to save.

Because of medical and scientific advances, pestilence no longer can control populations effectively, balancing them with agriculture's potential. As a result, other measures are needed to control "undesirable genetic traits."

An effective political substitute for war requires "alternate enemies....of credible quality and magnitude, if a transition to peace is ever to come about without social disintegration." Most likely, "such a threat will have to be invented."

Other extreme ideas included:

Poverty is necessary and desirable, the same Orwellian social stability 1884 idea, about "keeping the Low's in poverty and the High's in power, forever."

A modern, sophisticated form of slavery serves the same social control purpose.

Government must optimize the number of warfare deaths, never letting a good opportunity go to waste.

"Intensified environment pollution," including air and water is acceptable, and, without war, a comprehensive eugenics program and "universal test-tube procreation might have to substitute."

SSG members rejected individual freedom, opting for subservience to a ruling elite, the system that governs world nations and America since inception, instituted by the Founders so the country's owners could run it, and wage wars to solidify control.

The Report concluded that:

"The permanent possibility of war is the foundation for stable government. It supplies the basis for general acceptance of political authority." It lets societies maintain class distinctions, and ensures the subordination of citizens to the state, run by elites with "residual war powers."

As for policy measures in a world at peace, SSG members stated "as strongly as we can, that the war system cannot responsibly be allowed to disappear," absent a credible alternative to ensure social stability and societal control. Only then should transitional measures be considered.

However:

"Such solutions, if indeed they exist, will not be arrived at without a revolutionary revision of the modes of thought heretofore considered appropriate. Some observers....believe" the obstacles can't be overcome "in our time, that the price of peace is, simply, too high....It is uncertain....whether peace will ever be possible. It is far more questionable....that it would be desirable even if it were demonstrably attainable."

Though repugnant to many, "The war system....has demonstrated its effectiveness since the beginning of recorded history." A viable peace alternative would constitute a giant leap "into the unknown" with its inevitable risks. Genuine peace will be destabilizing until proved otherwise.

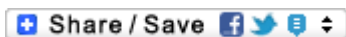
SSG recommendations included establishing a "permanent WAR/PEACE Research Agency" with unlimited funds to be used at its own discretion.

It would be organized like the National Security Council "responsible solely to the President" or officials he designates - then operate secretly for two purposes. First, to determine, from what's known and can be learned, the statistical probability for an eventual peace. Second, to conduct "War Research" to ensure "the continuing viability of the war system" as long as it's believed necessary and/or desirable for society's stability and survival.

The Iron Mountain Report "has already created our present. It is now shaping our future," one single-mindedly for war to the detriment of all but imperial interests and profiteers that benefit handsomely.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. Also visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the [Progressive Radio News Hour](#) on the Progressive Radio Network Thursdays at 10AM US Central time and Saturdays and Sundays at noon. All programs are archived for easy listening.

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Tom Engelhardt: America's Tragic Descent into Empire

America's Tragic Descent into Empire

By Tom Engelhardt [article link](#)

July 7, 2010 | AlterNet | TomDispatch | Haymarket Books

The following is an excerpt from [The American Way of War: How Bush's Wars Became Obama's](#) by Tom Engelhardt (Haymarket, 2010).

"War is peace" was one of the memorable slogans on the facade of the Ministry of Truth, or Minitrue in "Newspeak," the language invented by George Orwell in 1948 for his dystopian novel 1984. Some sixty years later, a quarter century after Orwell's imagined future bit the dust, the phrase is, in a number of ways, eerily applicable to the United States. On September 10, 2009, for instance, a New York Times front-page story by Eric Schmitt and David E. Sanger was headlined "Obama Is Facing Doubts in Party on Afghanistan, Troop Buildup at Issue." It offered a modern version of journalistic Newspeak.

"Doubts," of course, imply dissent, and in fact just the week before there had been a major break in Washington's ranks, though not among Democrats. The conservative columnist George Will wrote a piece offering blunt advice to the Obama administration, summed up in its headline: "Time to Get Out of Afghanistan." In our age of political and audience fragmentation and polarization, think of this as the Afghan version of Vietnam's Walter Cronkite moment.

The Times report on those Democratic doubts, on the other hand, represented a more typical Washington moment. Ignored, for instance, was Wisconsin senator Russ Feingold's call for the president to develop an Afghan withdrawal timetable. The focus of the piece was instead a planned speech by Michigan senator Carl Levin, chairman of the Armed Services Committee. He was, Schmitt and Sanger reported, hoping to push back against well-placed leaks (in the Times, among other places) indicating that war commander General Stanley McChrystal was urging the president to commit fifteen thousand to forty-five thousand more American troops to the Afghan War.

Here, according to the two reporters, was the gist of Levin's message about what everyone agreed was a "deteriorating" U.S. position: "[H]e was against sending more American combat troops to Afghanistan until the United States speeded up the training and equipping of more Afghan security forces."

Think of this as the line in the sand within the Democratic Party. Both positions could be summed up with the same word: More. The essence of this "debate" came down to: More of them versus more of us (and keep in mind that more of "them" -- an expanded training program for the Afghan National Army -- actually meant more of "us" in the form of extra trainers and advisers). In other words, however contentious the disputes in Washington, however dismally the public viewed the war, however much the president's war coalition might threaten to crack open, the only choices were between more and more. In such a situation, no alternatives are likely to get a real hearing.

Few alternative policy proposals even exist because alternatives that don't fit with "more" have ceased to be part of Washington's war culture. No serious thought, effort, or investment goes into them. Clearly referring to Will's column, one of the unnamed "senior officials" who swarm through our major newspapers made the administration's position clear, saying sardonically, according to the Washington Post, "I don't anticipate that the briefing books for the [administration] principals on these debates over the next weeks and months will be filled with submissions from opinion columnists. I do anticipate they will be filled with vigorous discussion of how successful we've been to date."

State of War

Because the United States does not look like a militarized country, it's hard for Americans to grasp that Washington is a war capital, that the United States is a war state, that it garrisons much of the planet, and that the norm for us is to be at war somewhere (usually, in fact, many places) at any moment. Similarly, we've become used to the idea that, when various forms of force (or threats of force) don't work, our response, as in Afghanistan, is to recalibrate and apply some alternate version of the same under a new or rebranded name -- the hot one now being "counterinsurgency," or COIN -- in a marginally different manner. When it comes to war, as well as preparations for war, more is now generally the order of the day.

This wasn't always the case. The early Republic that the most hawkish conservatives love to cite was a land whose leaders looked with suspicion on the very idea of a standing army. They would have viewed our hundreds of global garrisons, our vast network of spies, agents, Special Forces teams, surveillance operatives, interrogators, rent-a-guns, and mercenary corporations -- as well as our staggering Pentagon budget and the constant future-war gaming and planning that accompanies it -- with genuine horror.

The question is: What kind of country do we actually live in when the so-called U.S. Intelligence Community lists seventeen intelligence services ranging from Air Force Intelligence, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Defense Intelligence Agency to the National Reconnaissance Office and the National Security Agency? What could "intelligence" mean once spread over seventeen sizeable, bureaucratic, often competing outfits with a cumulative 2009 budget estimated at more than \$55 billion (a startling percentage of which is controlled by the Pentagon)? What exactly is so intelligent about all that? And why does no one think it even mildly strange or in any way out of the ordinary?

What does it mean when the most military-obsessed administration in our history, which, year after year, submitted ever more bloated Pentagon budgets to Congress, is succeeded by one headed by a president who ran, at least partially, on an antiwar platform, and who then submitted an even larger Pentagon budget? What does this tell you about Washington and about the viability of nonmilitarized alternatives to the path George W. Bush took? What does it mean when the new

administration, surveying nearly eight years and two wars' worth of disasters, decides to expand the U.S. Armed Forces rather than shrink the U.S. global mission?

What kind of a world do we inhabit when, at a time of mass unemployment, the American taxpayer is financing the building of a three-story, exceedingly permanent-looking \$17 million troop barracks at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan? This, in turn, is part of a taxpayer-funded \$220 million upgrade of the base that includes new "water treatment plants, headquarters buildings, fuel farms, and power generating plants." And what about the U.S. air base built at Balad, north of Baghdad, that has fifteen bus routes, two fire stations, two water treatment plants, two sewage treatment plants, two power plants, a water bottling plant, and the requisite set of fast-food outlets, PXes, and so on, as well as air traffic levels sometimes compared to those at Chicago's O'Hare International?

What kind of world are we living in when a plan to withdraw most U.S. troops from Iraq involves the removal of more than 1.5 million pieces of equipment? Or in which the possibility of withdrawal leads the Pentagon to issue nearly billion-dollar contracts (new ones!) to increase the number of private security contractors in that country?

What do you make of a world in which the U.S. military has robot assassins in the skies over its war zones, 24/7, and the "pilots" who control them from thousands of miles away are ready on a moment's notice to launch missiles -- "Hellfire" missiles at that -- into Pashtun peasant villages in the wild, mountainous borderlands of Pakistan and Afghanistan? What does it mean when American pilots can be at war "in" Afghanistan, 9 to 5, by remote control, while their bodies remain at a base outside Las Vegas, and then they can head home past a sign that warns them to drive carefully because this is "the most dangerous part of your day"?

What does it mean when, for our security and future safety, the Pentagon funds the wildest ideas imaginable for developing high-tech weapons systems, many of which sound as if they came straight out of the pages of sci-fi novels? Take, for example, Boeing's advanced coordinated system of handheld drones, robots, sensors, and other battlefield surveillance equipment slated for seven army brigades within the next two years at a cost of \$2 billion and for the full army by 2025; or the Next Generation Bomber, an advanced "platform" slated for 2018; or a truly futuristic bomber, "a suborbital semi-spacecraft able to move at hypersonic speed along the edge of the atmosphere," for 2035? What does it mean about our world when those people in our government peering deepest into a blueskies future are planning ways to send armed "platforms" up into those skies and kill more than a quarter century from now? And do you ever wonder about this: If such weaponry is being endlessly developed for our safety and security, and that of our children and grandchildren, why is it that one of our most successful businesses involves the sale of the same weaponry to other countries? Few Americans are comfortable thinking about this, which may explain why global arms- trade pieces don't tend to make it onto the front pages of our newspapers.

In September 2009, the Times Pentagon correspondent Thom Shanker, for instance, wrote a rare piece on the subject, but it appeared inside the paper on a quiet Labor Day. "Despite Slump, U.S. Role as Top Arms Supplier Grows" was the headline. Perhaps Shanker, too, felt uncomfortable with his subject, because he included the following generic description: "In the highly competitive global arms market, nations vie for both profit and political influence through weapons sales, in particular to developing nations." The figures he cited from a congressional study of that "highly competitive" market told a different story: The United States, with \$37.8 billion in arms sales (up \$12.4 billion from 2007), controlled 68.4 percent of the global arms market in 2008. Highly competitively speaking, Italy came "a distant second" with \$3.7 billion.

In sales to "developing nations," the United States inked \$29.6 billion in weapons agreements or 70.1 percent of the market. Russia was a vanishingly distant second at \$3.3 billion, or 7.8 percent of the market. In other words, with 70 percent of the market, the United States actually has what, in any other field, would qualify as a monopoly position -- in this case, in things that go boom in the night. With the American car industry in a ditch, it seems that this (along with Hollywood films that go boom in the night) is what we now do best, as befits a war, if not warrior, state. Is that an American accomplishment you're comfortable with?

Consider this: War is now the American way, even if peace is what most Americans experience while their proxies fight in distant lands. Any serious alternative to war, which means our "security," is increasingly inconceivable. In Orwellian terms then, war is indeed peace in the United States -- and peace is war.

Newspeak, as Orwell imagined it, was an ever more constricted form of English that would, sooner or later, make "all other modes of thought impossible." "It was intended," he wrote in an appendix to his novel, "that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought should be literally unthinkable." When it comes to war (and peace), we live in a world of American Newspeak in which alternatives to a state of war are not only ever more unacceptable, but ever harder to imagine. If war is now our permanent situation, it has also been sundered from a set of words that once accompanied it. It lacks, for instance, "victory." After all, when was the last time the United States actually won a war (unless you include our "victories" over small countries incapable of defending themselves, like the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada in 1983 or powerless Panama in 1989)? The smashing "victory" over Saddam Hussein in the First Gulf War only led to a stop-and-start conflict now almost two decades old that has proved a catastrophe.

Keep heading backward through the Vietnam and Korean Wars, and the U.S. military was last truly victorious in 1945. But achieving victory no longer seems to matter. War American-style is now conceptually unending, as are preparations for it. When George W. Bush proclaimed a Global War on Terror (aka World War IV), conceived as a "generational struggle" like the cold war, he caught a certain American reality. In a sense, the ongoing war system can't absorb victory. Any such endpoint might indeed prove to be a kind of defeat.

No longer has war anything to do with the taking of territory either, or even with direct conquest. War is increasingly a state of being, not a process with a beginning, an end, and an actual geography.

Similarly drained of its traditional meaning has been the word "security" -- though it has moved from a state of being (secure) to an eternal, immensely profitable process whose endpoint is unachievable. If we ever decided we were either secure enough, or more willing to live without the unreachable idea of total security, the American way of war and the national security state would lose much of their meaning. In other words, in our world, security is insecurity.

As for "peace" -- war's companion and theoretical opposite -- it, too, has been emptied of meaning and all but discredited. Appropriately enough, diplomacy, the part of government that classically would have been associated with peace, or at least with the pursuit of the goals of war by other means, has been dwarfed by, subordinated to, or even subsumed by the Pentagon. In recent years, the U.S. military, with its vast funds, has taken over, or encroached upon, a range of activities that once would have been left to an underfunded State Department, especially humanitarian aid operations, foreign aid, and what's now called nation-building.

Diplomacy itself has been militarized and, like our country, is now hidden behind massive fortifications, and has been placed under Lord of the Flies-style guard. The State Department's embassies are now bunkers and military-style headquarters for the prosecution of war policies. Its officials, when enough of them can be found, are now sent out into the provinces in war zones to do "civilian" things.

And peace itself? Simply put, there's no money in it. Of the nearly trillion dollars the United States invests in war and war-related activities, nothing goes to peace. No money, no effort, no thought. The very idea that there might be peaceful alternatives to endless war is so discredited that it's left to utopians, bleeding hearts, and feathered doves. As in Orwell's Newspeak, while "peace" remains with us, it's largely been shorn of its possibilities. No longer the opposite of war, it's just a rhetorical flourish embedded, like one of our reporters, in Warspeak.

What a world might be like in which we began not just to withdraw our troops from one war to fight another, but to seriously scale down the American global mission, close those hundreds of bases -- as of 2010, there were almost four hundred of them, macro to micro, in Afghanistan alone -- and bring our military home is beyond imagining. To discuss such obviously absurd possibilities makes you an apostate to America's true religion and addiction, which is force. However much it might seem that most of us are peaceably watching our TV sets or computer screens or iPhones, we Americans are also -- always -- marching as to war. We may not all bother to attend the church of our new religion, but we all tithe. We all partake. In this sense, we live peaceably in a state of war.

Excerpted from [The American Way of War: How Bush's Wars Became Obama's](#) by Tom Engelhardt (Haymarket, 2010). All rights reserved

Tom Engelhardt, editor of Tomdispatch.com, is co-founder of the American Empire Project and author of [The American Way of War: How Bush's Wars Became Obama's](#). Sign up to receive the latest updates from TomDispatch.com [here](#).

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Mike Whitney: More Red Flags for the Economy

More Red Flags for the Economy

by Mike Whitney [article link](#)

July 6, 2010 | Global Research

Bonds are signaling that the recovery is in trouble. The yield on the 10-year Treasury (2.97 percent) has fallen to levels not seen since the peak of the crisis while the yield on the two-year note has dropped to historic lows. This is a sign of extreme pessimism. Investors are scared and moving into liquid assets. Their confidence has begun to wane. Economist John Maynard Keynes examined the issue of confidence in his masterpiece "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money". He says:

"The state of long-term expectation, upon which our decisions are based, does not solely depend, therefore, on the most probable forecast we can make. It also depends on the confidence with which we make this forecast — on how highly we rate the likelihood of our best forecast turning out quite wrong....The state of confidence, as they term it, is a matter to which practical men always pay the closest and most anxious attention."

Volatility, high unemployment, and a collapsing housing market are eroding investor confidence and adding to the gloominess. Economists who make their projections on the data alone, should revisit Keynes. Confidence matters. Businesses and households have started to hoard and the cycle of deleveraging is still in its early stages. Obama's fiscal stimulus will run out just months after the Fed has ended its bond purchasing program. That's bound to shrink the money supply and lead to tighter credit. Soon, wages will contract and the CPI will turn from disinflation to outright deflation. Aggregate demand will weaken as households and consumers are forced to increase personal savings. Here's how Paul Krugman sums it up:

"We are now, I fear, in the early stages of a third depression....And this third depression will be primarily a failure of policy. Around the world ... governments are obsessing about inflation when the real threat is deflation, preaching the need for belt-tightening when the real problem is inadequate spending. ... After all, unemployment — especially long-term unemployment — remains at levels that would have been considered catastrophic not long ago, and shows no sign of coming down rapidly. And both the United States and Europe are well on their way toward Japan-style deflationary traps.

I don't think this is really about Greece, or indeed about any realistic appreciation of the tradeoffs between deficits and jobs. It is, instead, the victory of an orthodoxy that has little to do with rational analysis, whose main tenet is that imposing suffering on other people is how you show leadership in tough times." ("The Third Depression", Paul Krugman, New York Times)

More than 8 million jobs have been lost since the beginning of the crisis, but President Barack Obama has made no attempt to initiate government work programs or even a second stimulus. Government spending must increase to make up for the slack in demand and reduce unemployment. That means larger budget deficits until households have patched their balance sheets and can spend again at pre-crisis levels. Withdrawing stimulus now, while the economy is still weak, will crimp spending, collapse state tax revenues and send unemployment skyrocketing. Here's an excerpt from an article by James K. Galbraith which helps to explain what's needed to get back on track:

"The only way to reduce a deficit caused by unemployment is to reduce unemployment. And this must be done with a substantial component of private financing, which is to say by bank credit, if the public deficit is going to be reduced. This is a fact of accounting. It is not a matter of theory or ideology; it is merely a fact. The only way to grow out of our deficit is to cure the financial crisis.

To cure the financial crisis would require two comprehensive measures. The first is debt restructuring for the entire household sector, to restore private borrowing power. The second is a reconstruction of the banking system, effectively purging the toxic assets from bank balance sheets and also reforming the bank personnel and compensation and other practices that produced the financial crisis in the first place. To repeat: this is the only way to generate deficit-reducing, privately-funded growth and employment.

To be clear: unemployment can be cured without private-sector financing, if public deficits are large enough — as was done during World War II. But if the objective is to reduce public deficits, for whatever reason, then a large contribution from private credit is essential.

One more time: without private credit, deficit reduction plans through fiscal austerity, now or in the future, will fail. They cannot succeed." (James K. Galbraith, "Why the Fiscal Commission does not serve the American People", New Deal 2.0)

The economy cannot grow without private sector credit expansion. But the banks are constrained by toxic assets and the lack of creditworthy loan applicants. At the same time, deleveraging households and consumers are less inclined to borrow at any rate. Retirement age "boomers" have lost nearly \$12 trillion in net wealth since the crisis began and must save for the years ahead. They are no longer in a position to spend freely figuring that their home equity will rise 10% or 15% per year creating a cushion for the future. Those days are over. Bond yields are telling us that retail investors have lost faith in the housing and equities markets and moved their savings into the most risk adverse, low-yielding, assets available---US Treasuries. Here's what Keynes said on the topic:

"Our desire to hold Money as a store of wealth is a barometer of the degree of our distrust of our own calculations and conventions concerning the future.... The significance of this characteristic of money has usually been overlooked; and in so far as it has been noticed, the essential nature of the phenomenon has been misdescribed. For what has attracted attention has been the quantity of money which has been hoarded... supposed to have a direct proportionate effect on the price level through affecting the velocity of circulation. But the quantity of hoards can only be altered either if the total quantity of money is changed or if the quantity of current money income (I speak broadly) is changed; whereas fluctuations in the degree of confidence are capable of... modifying... the premium which has to be offered to induce people not to hoard. And changes in... liquidity preference... affect, not [consumer] prices, but the rate of interest...." (John Maynard Keynes, "1937 Quarterly Journal of Economics")

So hoarding reduces spending which leads to economic contraction. But behavior can be altered by changing incentives, raising incomes or restoring confidence. Keynes was less sanguine about increasing the money supply which he compared to "trying to get fat by buying a larger belt". The point is to increase consumption, which means that money has to get in the hands of the people who will spend it to grow the economy. Bank reserves alone won't do the trick. Fiscal stimulus is the way to go.

Presently--according to data collected by the Federal Reserve-- companies are hoarding capital due to the lack of investment opportunities. High unemployment has led to falling demand which is stifling investment. As households cut back, more companies will opt to pay down debt rather than seek new investments. (which is what happened in Japan) This

will cause a dropoff in economic activity and deepen the slump. The government must increase the deficits to offset cuts in state and private sector spending and to avoid another excruciating cycle of debt deflation.

The economy is at a tipping point. Unemployment has flattened out at 9.5%, but 650,000 discouraged workers have stopped looking for work altogether which will add to the slowdown. The cash-strapped states are laying off and furloughing workers in droves. The rate of underemployment has soared to 16.5%. There are 6 applicants for every new job created. Conservatives believe that the ongoing crisis creates a unique opportunity to crush the labor movement and to force down wages. Republican senators and congressmen have quashed a bill that would extend unemployment benefits to over a million workers. Apart from the appalling cruelty of the action, GOP obstructionism only adds to deflationary pressures. It is an entirely counterproductive move.

Nomura economist David Resler says that congress's action will have an immediate and damaging effect on the economy and could trim GDP by 0.2 percentage point this quarter and by 0.4 point in the period from July through September. (Bloomberg) Republicans are precipitating a crisis to garner support in the upcoming midterm elections, but they may not fully appreciate the knock-on effects of their vote. Here's a clip from economist Steven Keen who sheds a bit of light on the topic:

"The final debt-driven collapse, in which both wages and profitability plunge, gives the lie to the neoclassical perception that crises are caused by wages being too high, and the solution to the crisis is to reduce wages....

What their blinkered ignorance of the role of the finance sector obscures is that the essential class conflict in financial capitalism is not between workers and capitalists, but between financial and industrial capital. The rising level of debt directly leads to a falling worker share of GDP, while leaving industrial capital's share unaffected until the final collapse drives it too into oblivion." (Steve Keen's Scary Minsky Model, Yves Smith, Naked Capitalism)

So, yes, in the short-term, falling wages may seem desirable for management, but in the long-term, it could trigger an industrywide collapse.

The FOMC's June statement was a real stunner. The economy is losing-ground in nearly every area. Household and business spending, bank lending and home sales are all either slowing down or falling sharply. The Commerce Dept. revised its first quarter estimate of GDP from 3.0% to 2.7% due to lower than expected consumer spending. The recovery is largely a mirage created by inventory adjustments and fiscal stimulus. 46 of the 50 states are mired in huge deficits that will require substantial cuts to balance. That will be a drag on activity going forward. This is from Bloomberg News:

"States face a cumulative budget gap of \$127.4 billion as 46 prepare for the start of their fiscal year on July 1, according to a report this month by the National Governors Association and the National Association of State Budget Officers. They will have to fill that hole largely on their own, as aid from the federal government under programs including President Barack Obama's \$787 billion stimulus package starts to wind down.

State and local governments will have to dismiss 162,000 workers if Congress fails to extend about \$24 billion of Medicaid payments, Lawrence Mishel, president of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, said during the governors' call. Payrolls have already registered 11 straight months of year-over-year declines, the longest stretch of continuous drops since 1983, based on Labor Department data." (Bloomberg)

State budget cutting will swell the unemployment lines and slow consumer spending. With fiscal stimulus quickly running out and the deficit hawks pushing for greater austerity, the Fed will be forced to intervene in the 4th quarter resuming its quantitative easing bond purchasing program to pump more liquidity into the financial system. The recovery is not self sustaining.

In Europe, the situation is even worse. ECB head Jean-Claude Trichet has been preaching austerity while conducting a massive stealth bank bailout, providing limitless funds in exchange for dodgy collateral, overnight deposits for wary banks that no longer trust the repo market, and bond purchases of sovereign debt that is vastly overpriced given the fiscal position of the issuers. Germany is calling for additional belt tightening across the eurozone to protect against fictitious inflation.

German policymakers don't understand that their trade surpluses translate into deficits in the Club Med nations, or that their solutions will only exacerbate existing imbalances, increase the budget deficits, and put the EU on course for another contraction. Here's an excerpt from the Wall Street Journal:

"Germany's unwillingness to accept higher domestic levels of inflation in order to alleviate the burden of debt elsewhere in the euro zone ultimately constrains the European Central Bank in how much it can do on the monetary side...

... governments already nursing fragile financial sectors are being forced into some of the most severe austerity programs ever planned in modern developed economies at a time of rigid monetary policy.

If policy goes through as planned, a severe depression is almost certain to follow across peripheral euro-zone countries and a significant downturn elsewhere across the continent. Even European countries with power over their own monetary policy are bound to suffer from a euro-zone slump." ("Euro-Zone Policy Sets Stage for Depression", Allen Mattick, Wall Street Journal)

After Lehman Bros. collapsed in September 2008, the world was pulled back from the brink of depression by an activist Federal Reserve that (arbitrarily) assumed the authority of congress and conducted a massive rescue operation that provided unlimited liquidity and government support for teetering financial institutions. And, while the Fed's uneven treatment of Wall Street has been widely criticized, (the banks have been allowed to carry on much as they had before) the precipitous slide into the abyss was halted. Now, congress seems eager to reverse that achievement for fleeting political gain.

It's important to understand the process so we can settle on a remedy. Economist Bradford DeLong explains what's going on with the economy in greater detail and why it would be a mistake to count on the so-called "self correcting" power of the market rather than government intervention. (additional fiscal stimulus) Here's an excerpt from DeLong's blog "Grasping Reality With Both Hands":

In our normal, microeconomic world it is not a big deal when excess demand emerges in one market and excess supply emerges in another.....But in macroeconomics things are different. The excess supply is economy-wide--throughout all commodity markets, producing supply in excess of demand for goods, services, labor, and capacity. Producers and entrepreneurs respond to an aggregate demand shortfall just as individual producers respond to a particular shortfall of demand for their products: they hold sales to liquidate inventories, they cut prices, they cut wages to try to preserve margins, they fire workers.

Thus workers fall into unemployment from the excess supply in the goods and services industries...

Wages should then fall. And when wages fall higher profits should induce employers to expand production even without any increase in spending. Eventually wages should fall low enough that the economy returns to full employment and to normal levels of production and capacity utilization even without any increase in asset supplies. Or will it? Falling wages means that households have even less money. Some of them will default on their loans. Some banks will find that their reserves are no longer large enough to provide an ample cushion because of these loan defaults...

Relying on nominal deflation of wages to restore full employment runs the risk of creating yet another shock of excess demand in finance and excess supply in goods and services to deepen the depression. The hoped-for cure's first effect is to worsen the disease.

We trust the market to take care of a microeconomic excess-demand excess-supply situation in a few industries in a productive way in a short period of time. Do we trust the market to do the same way to a macroeconomic imbalance, to quickly resolve a depression in a productive way without help? No, we do not. Rather than relying on economy-wide deflation to eventually restore balance, we should pursue other alternatives." ("Microeconomic and Macroeconomic Excess Supply", J. Bradford DeLong, Grasping Reality With Both Hands)

True, in some perverse sense, the market is "self correcting", but in this case, it would take years, if not decades, of high unemployment, overcapacity, dwindling investment and social unrest to put the ship aright. Are we ready for that? The preferable solution is to plug the regulatory holes that allow financial institutions to speculate in massively-leveraged instruments (that have implicit government guarantees), and promote income growth so the supply/demand balance that is essential to economic growth is restored. The way out of this mess is through more jobs and better pay. But that will take a mass mobilization of working people and whopping big deficits.

Mike Whitney is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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[Jim Hightower: Six Ways to Reassemble Amercia's Democracy](#)

Six Ways to Reassemble Amercia's Democracy

by: Jim Hightower [article link](#) [article link](#)

07 July 2010 | t r u t h o u t | Op-Ed

On the Fourth of July, we celebrated Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Madison and all the other great men who created our democracy, right?

Not exactly. The Founders did create the framework for a democratic republic, but they didn't create much democracy. Indeed, in America's first presidential election, only 4 percent of the people were even eligible to vote.

The Founders created the possibility for democracy, but it took the struggle (often bloody and always hard) of ordinary people over the years to create the substance. In some decades, we've made advances; in others, we've fallen back -- including in the past three decades, when the power of America's workaday majority has steadily been usurped by corporate elites. So now, We the People must put America back on its historic path toward economic and political democracy.

"Fine," you might say, "but how? I'm just one person. What can I do?"

1) Start by considering what's reasonable for you. Few of us can be full-time activists, and the list of issues and problems is intimidating, long and complex. So just take one bite, choosing an issue that interests you most, then start contributing what you can (time, skills, contacts, money, enthusiasm, etc.) to making progress. No contribution is too small. If you can only devote half a day a week, or an hour a day or even minutes a day -- it all adds up. As a young Oregon woman said of her half-day-a-week volunteer door-knocking in a legislative race: "I was only drop in the bucket, but I was one drop. And without all of us, the bucket would not have filled up."

2) Inform yourself. A little effort can quickly connect you to accessible, usable information and insights on any given topic, allowing you to gain a "citizen's level" of expertise so you can talk to others about it. Read progressive periodicals, tune in to progressive broadcasts, get information from public-interest groups, and plug into good websites and blogs.

Don't know how to go online? Nearly all public libraries not only have computers, but also librarians and volunteers who'll assist you in finding the info you want and teach you how to use the machines. Or find a youngster (maybe your grandchildren or someone at church) who'll help you. Yes, you can do this!

3) Democracy belongs to those who show up. Join with others. Everyone feels better when they're part of a group, a movement, a community (whether real or virtual). In your own town or neighborhood, many others are either already working together or willing to help form a group -- seek them out, maybe at bookstores, book clubs, coffee shops, events, churches, blogs, Websites and other meeting places.

4) A community is more than a collection of issues and endless meetings. Combine the serious with the social, and remember the Yugoslavian proverb, "You can fight the gods and still have fun!" So discuss your issues and strategies at potluck suppers (bring the kids, have some music, pour a little wine), throw an annual festival of politics, create weekly sessions of beer-mug democracy at local taverns, set aside one day a week for Big Talk (rather than small talk) at the coffeeshop, etc.

5) Become the media. Create a local newsletter, blog, bulletin board (on the wall or online), Internet radio broadcast, etc. Just as importantly, enlist high-school or community college speech and journalism teachers to help you learn how to do radio and TV interviews and how to get local media to cover your issues. Also, get them to train you and others in public speaking, so you can have your own speakers' bureau to address clubs, churches, schools, etc.

6) Hold your own "what to do" sessions in your community. Don't wait for national progressive groups, which haven't figured out a cohesive strategy for focusing on people's anger about the meekness of Washington's Democratic leaders. Instead, have your own discussions about what should be done nationally -- if anything -- and start zapping those ideas to other communities, heads of national groups, progressive media outlets and so forth. Let the ideas percolate up from a thousand localities!

That's what democracy is. Some assembly required.

National radio commentator, writer, public speaker, and author of the book, [Swim Against The Current: Even A Dead Fish Can Go With The Flow](#), [Jim Hightower](#) has spent three decades battling the Powers That Be on behalf of the Powers That Ought To Be - consumers, working families, environmentalists, small businesses, and just-plain-folks.

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Tuesday, July 6, 2010

God's Names: Our Responsibilities

John 1:12 But as many as received him, *to them gave he power* [G1849] to become the sons of God, [even] to them that *believe on his name*:

[Strong's Concordance #1849, exousia; - power - authority - right - liberty - jurisdiction - strength 1) power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission 2) physical and mental power; the ability or strength with which one is endued, which he either possesses or exercises 3) the power of authority (influence) and *of right* 4) the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed) 4a) the power of judicial decisions; of authority to manage domestic affairs 4b) a thing subject to authority or rule, jurisdiction; one who possesses authority; a ruler, a magistrate, the leading and more powerful among created beings superior to man, spiritual potentates 4c) a sign of the husband's authority over his wife [Christ over the church, His bride], ie., the veil with which propriety required a women to cover herself 4d) the sign of regal authority, a crown].

Yah is Yahweh (As Become My Salvation)
Jesus (Salvation/Healing)
Holy "Being"

Yahweh-Yireh; Yahweh will see, or Yahweh will provide.
Yahweh-Rophekha; Yahweh who heals you.
Yahweh-Nissi; Yahweh my banner.
Yahweh-Meqaddishkhem; Yahweh who makes you holy.
Yahweh-Shalom; Yahweh is peace.
Yahweh-Tsebhaoth; Yahweh of hosts.
Yahweh-Tsidqenu; Yahweh our righteousness.
Yahweh-Shammah; Yahweh is there.
Yahweh-Elyon; Yahweh most high.
Yahweh-Roi; Yahweh my shepherd.
Yah is Yahweh as having become my salvation.

Genesis 1:1 immediately links Elohim with creation [Genesis 1:26. And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after our likeness]:

Jehovah (The (Self-)Existing One)
Christ (Anointing/Responsibility)
Sacred "Doing"

- * Jehovah; the Existing One.
- * El; the Almighty, the omnipotent Elohim in all his strength, the God who knows all.
- * Elohim (plural intensive, singular meaning), the God who sees all.
- * Elohim fulfills his purpose for his people, *THE GOD FAMILY*.
- * Eloah "the living God" (in contrast to inanimate idols), is a name stressing the Elohim is to be worshiped. Eloah is used in connection with God's will rather than his power.
- * Elyon "God Most High" is the possessor of heaven and earth.
- * El-Shaddai; the Almighty, is the all-bountiful giver of grace. He supplies all the needs of his people.
- * Adon, rendered "Lord," meaning Lord as Ruler of the earth.
- * Adonim, the plural of Adon, carries all the meaning of Adon, but to a higher degree. God is the owner and proprietor of the earth, the Lord who rules his own.
- * "Lord" meaning the Lord in relation to the earth; Adonay.

Thou shalt not covet - for power, riches, gain, etc. -- I will not give you power over me because I covet reward, position, influence, from you !! -- the reward for work must be communitarian in value, meaning -- we must NOT covet and be self-satisfied in the physical or spiritual; we must NOT covet power [real or imagined], or means, of any kind !! -- the inherent power [G1411] of God comes from the *application of God's word*, the Gospel, in righteousness ... we must be *brothers and sisters in the faith*, having no reputation, nor seeking one; not over, but among, with, serving.

[Strong's Concordance #1411 dunamis; AV - power - mighty work - strength - miracle - might - virtue - mighty 1) strength power, ability 1a) inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth 1b) power for performing miracles 1c) moral power and excellence of soul -- 1d) the power and influence which belong to riches and wealth 1e) power and resources arising from numbers 1f) power consisting in or resting upon armies, forces, hosts.]

We [individually and collectively; physically and spiritually] must realize that God All In All, I Am That I Am - I Am What I Will Become, I Will Be What I Will Be [Rev. 3:14, Christ is the first begotten, the first-born of many, ** the beginning of the Creation of God **, not of Creation itself, but of the *Creation of God*, the Elohim, God now being *created* as FAMILY; actual created God-Kind] - is our responsibility also, we are part of the creating process [the relationship]: I Am What I Will Become, and God All In All, this is "us", this is God "calling to us", to be *begotten*, to learn and apply His

Word, to grow in Grace and Knowledge [to know, believe, understand], to acquire God's perception(s) [of the reduction of our humanity, our being, by our existence apart from God], to make the Kingdom of God a reality now, *at this time*, NOT man's way but God's way !! - we will determine what God will become [by our attributes; by our strengths, weaknesses, etc., by our reward] !!

We must build God's self-sufficient community, and when it is realized, if not before, we must reject all claims to man's constructs, our allotted share [the use of; partake]; these are corporate schemes to placate the unequal, unjust distribution of the *commonwealth* and is therefore opposed to the KOG; these national sins [and our personal ones] *make void the Word of God* -- we are to be "separate", considered "strangers and pilgrims, sojourners" in the land [the nations of man] while we build and establish the nation of God - we are to be in union with God, NOT a partaker/partner of this evil construct - we must reject our role(s) in society, the consumption of power [Christ's example] - we must have authentic faith in God [freely given] and reject a forced, high cost, manufactured faith in the system - we are NOT to have a share in [G3581 xenos], to be numbered among carnal men - our "relation" to man must be one of giver NOT (par)taker of other men's sins - righteousness is God's "nature of interaction" for His Family [G3056 logos; with whom as (future) judge we stand in relation]; we must dwell in righteousness, above reproach [shame, disgrace, discredit, or blame; or a source, cause, occasion of this; rebuke; reproof; censure] - the 10C are primary !!

The role is a consumption of power - it locates [or places] one in the representational hierarchy, and hence in the spectacle: at the top, at the bottom, in the middle, but never outside the hierarchy, whether this side of it or beyond it - the role is thus the means of access to the mechanism of [a chosen, or forced] culture: a form of initiation; it is also the medium of exchange of individual sacrifice, and in this sense performs a compensatory function [to the power]; and lastly, as a residue of separation, it strives to construct a behavioral unity; in this aspect it depends on identification - the series of poses chosen more or less unconsciously from the range of dominant stereotypes [the stereotype is the model of the role, the role is a model form of behavior; the repetition of an attitude creates a role, the repetition of a role creates a stereotype; the stereotype is an objective form into which people are integrated by means of the role; skill in playing and handling roles determines rank in the hierarchy] - why do we succumb to the seduction of borrowed attitudes?

The satisfaction derived from a well-played [or well mimicked] role is in direct proportion to the distance from ourselves [and from our God], to our self-negation and our self-sacrifice [the prime function of the (imposed; acquired) role is that of social adaptation, of integrating people into the well-policed universe of things; of control] - where [the SAGE] constraint breaks people, and mediation [government; democracy] makes fools of them, the *seduction of power* [the impossibility of realization: power as sum of seductions; the evil continual, continuance; no summation (fulfillment of desire) possible; the push and pull] is what makes them love their oppression [covetousness; the grasp of evil, the embrace; *hierarchy*]; because of it people give up their real riches: for a cause that mutilates them, for an imaginary unity that fragments them, for an appearance that reifies them, for roles that wrest them from authentic life, for a time whose passage defines and confines them -- power's strength lies in its facility in enforcing both actual separation and false union - is what drives people to seek power the very weakness to which power reduces them? -- [the "role" based on *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, author Raoul Vaneigem [with additions]]

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Community Congregations

The hierarchical government form violates the 10C:

1. it is in the service of another god; BAAL [ownership; over and upon];
 2. it is the Roman image, the image of the Beast;
 3. it is taking God's name in vain; worshipping [as way of life] in vain;
- [God's name(s) (His/our spiritual characteristics/responsibilities) denied; God's truth partially taught, but in *little strength*; His government has been denied; the strength has been consumed, in vain, from within];

4. it is employed, working for itself on the new moons, Sabbaths, holy days;
5. it is dishonoring God, our Father, and our Mother, the Church;
6. it is committing murder [the way of gain = the way of Cain];
7. it is committing adultery; fornication (with the world) as instrumentality;
8. it is stealing the authority of God away from the brethren; it is stealing God's tithes (community contribution) for its own work, the Gospel as product [maintaining the corporate church; way of gain as righteousness];
9. it is bearing false witness [hierarchy is NOT the government of God]; it is denying God's self-sufficient community [full preaching, witness]; it is denying the very "anointing" of the brethren, their ministry; it is (/they are) the "anti-Anointed";
10. it is covetous for position and power, honor and privilege; it is covetous for what its neighbor [the world] possesses.

The hierarchical government form is opposed to God, an enemy of God, *carnal*, yet, those within its grasp are our brethren -- you cannot exercise holy, righteous, spiritual character by utilizing the means of the world, the unholy, the unrighteous, the base; good cannot proceed out of evil [there is no good in evil, but, the *recognition* of the evil can bring the good] - God's presence will not occupy the same space, environment, with sin [evil is the absence of God; evil flows from sin, the negation of God's way; selfishness]; righteousness does not come from, originate, from unrighteousness, or its means, its instrumentality !!

We need to look at the governmental structure of the first-century church, built as it was on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, in which every person was a brother or sister and coheir with Christ; where no centralized hierarchy of power and control reigned supreme; where God's Spirit moved mightily among people who put their trust in Him alone -- we are the Body, *not* the corporation, of Christ; Jesus is our Master, King, High Priest and Lord - He and His apostles set the standard for governance -- it is when we understand our weakness that God will be our strength - if our hearts are right and our garments figuratively wet from washing each other's feet, then God can use us in His ** Ministry of Reconciliation ** to prepare a people for Christ's second coming - but, if we insist on patterning our self-rule after the kings of the gentiles, which invariably results in people *acting* like kings of the gentiles, then God might call others who will serve Him and Him alone. -- [this para., partial excerpt: Seeking the Government of God Here on Earth, by Lee Lisman; from the June 24, 1996 issue, In Transition]

The subject matter of 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 is *spiritual gifts*, positions of service and responsibility, NOT positions of rank, privilege, and authority over, or upon, the brethren, but in the service for, and of, the brethren - eldership and service from within the congregation !! - there is no professional ministry, no central authority; the government of God is a relationship amongst the ministry of the brethren with Christ as High Priest directing *the* work: the autonomous, self-sufficient, loosely confederated, and flexible [not rigid, but open to new truth, new experience] community-congregations, each *a* work of God, growing in the grace and knowledge of God, each walking with Christ, working out their own salvation with fear and trembling [reverence and awe] !! - a plurality of elders, mature in the spirit, providing guidance in each, with a sharing of the gifts by the brethren amongst the congregations, a *reciprocal relationship* of freely sharing all that God has freely shared with them, for the edification and growth of the Body of Christ - in *brethren assemblies* there is NO imposed distinction between clergy and laity !!

God's self-sufficient and free community ensures preservation of, and absolute, prohibition of evil [fornication as instrumentality; female rivals (church typed: hierarchy; divisions), etc.] within, the COG - the COG is in league [earth community covenant], in alliance with, the natural order of God's creation, in a *reciprocal relationship* [physical as-well-as spiritual; RESTORED TO LIFE] -- the COG is *our* dwelling, home, habitation, *the sacred tent* of God [the tabernacle]; it is a place of health, prosperity, and peace - the COG community is visited [to oversee, muster, charge, care for; do judgment] ** without sin ** [complicity, incur guilt; judge] [without losing oneself, without wandering from the way] - the absolute disestablishment of the hierarchical systemic accomplished; ** pre-millennial fulfillment ** possibility (it is up to us to avert the coming Holocaust); the COG persuaded, opened, made simple again; a very deep, and profound *work* NOW begins; the Holy Spirit deeply stirred, the COG collected, and bound together.

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Monday, July 5, 2010

Andrew Gavin Marshall: New Eugenics and the Rise of the Global Scientific Dictatorship

New Eugenics and the Rise of the Global Scientific Dictatorship

The Technological Revolution and the Future of Freedom, Part 3

by Andrew Gavin Marshall [article link](#)

July 5, 2010 | Global Research

This is the third and final part of the series, "The Technological Revolution and the Future of Freedom."

Part 1: [The Global Political Awakening and the New World Order](#)

Part 2: [Revolution and Repression in America](#)

Introduction

We are in the midst of the most explosive development in all of human history. Humanity is experiencing a simultaneously opposing and conflicting geopolitical transition, the likes of which has never before been anticipated or experienced. Historically, the story of humanity has been the struggle between the free-thinking individual and structures of power controlled by elites that seek to dominate land, resources and people. The greatest threat to elites at any time – historically and presently – is an awakened, critically thinking and politically stimulated populace. This threat has manifested itself throughout history, in different places and at different times. Ideas of freedom, democracy, civil and human rights, liberty and equality have emerged in reaction and opposition to power structures and elite systems of control.

The greatest triumphs of the human mind – whether in art, science or thought – have arisen out of and challenged great systems of power and control. The greatest of human misery and tragedy has arisen out of the power structures and systems that elites always seek to construct and manage. War, genocide, persecution and human degradation are directly the result of decisions made by those who control the apparatus of power, whether the power manifests itself as intellectual, ecclesiastical, spiritual, militaristic, or scientific. The most malevolent and ruthless power is that over the free human mind: if one controls how one thinks, they control the individual itself. The greatest human achievements are where individuals have broken free the shackles that bind the mind and let loose the inherent and undeniable power that lies in each and every individual on this small little planet.

Currently, our world is at the greatest crossroads our species has ever experienced. We are in the midst of the first truly global political awakening, in which for the first time in all of human history, all of mankind is politically awakened and stirring; in which whether inadvertently or intentionally, people are thinking and acting in political terms. This awakening is most evident in the developing world, having been made through personal experience to be acutely aware of the great disparities, disrespect, and domination inherent in global power structures. The awakening is spreading increasingly to the west itself, as the majority of the people living in the western developed nations are thrown into poverty and degradation. The awakening will be forced upon all people all over the world. Nothing, no development, ever in human history, has posed such a monumental threat to elite power structures.

This awakening is largely driven by the Technological Revolution, which through technology and electronics, in particular mass media and the internet, have made it so that people across the world are able to become aware of global issues and gain access to information from around the world. The Technological Revolution, thus, has fostered an Information Revolution which has, in turn, fed the global political awakening.

Simultaneously, the Technological Revolution has led to another unique and unprecedented development in human history, and one that is diametrically opposed, yet directly related to the global political awakening. For the first time in human history, free humanity is faced with the dominating threat of a truly global elite, who have at their hands the technology to impose a truly global system of control: a global scientific dictatorship. The great danger is that through the exponential growth in scientific techniques, elites will use these great new powers to control and dominate all of humanity in such a way that has never before been experienced.

Through all of human history, tyrants have used coercive force and terror to control populations. With the Technological Revolution, elites increasingly have the ability to control the very biology and psychology of the individual to a point where it may not be necessary to impose a system of terror, but rather where the control is implemented on a much deeper, psychological, subliminal and individual biological manner. While terror can prevent people from opposing power for a while, the scientific dictatorship can create a personal psycho-social condition in which the individual comes to love his or her own slavery; in which, like a mentally inferior pet, they are made to love their leaders and accept their servitude.

So we are presented with a situation in which humanity is faced with both the greatest threat and the greatest hope that we have ever collectively experienced in our short human history. This essay, the third part in the series, “The Technological Revolution and the Future of Freedom,” examines the ideas behind the global scientific dictatorship, and how it may manifest itself presently and in the future, with a particular focus on the emergence of ‘new eugenics’ as a system of mass control.

Free humanity faces the most monumental decision we have ever been presented with: do we feed and fuel the global political awakening into a true human psycho-social revolution of the mind, creating a new global political economy which empowers and liberates all of humanity; or... do we fall silently into a ‘brave new world’ of a global scientific oppression, the likes of which have never before been experienced, and whose dominance would never be more difficult to challenge and overcome?

We can either find a true freedom, or descend into a deep despotism. We are not powerless before this great ideational beast. We have, at our very fingertips the ability to use technology to our benefit and to re-shape the world so that it benefits the people of the world and not simply the powerful. It must be freedom for all or freedom for none.

What is the ‘Scientific Dictatorship’?

In 1932, Aldous Huxley wrote his dystopian novel, “Brave New World,” in which he looked at the emergence of the scientific dictatorships of the future. In his 1958 essay, “Brave New World Revisited,” Huxley examined how far the world had come in that short period since his book was published, and where the world was heading. Huxley wrote that:

In politics the equivalent of a fully developed scientific theory or philosophical system is a totalitarian dictatorship. In economics, the equivalent of a beautifully composed work of art is the smoothly running factory in which the workers are perfectly adjusted to the machines. The Will to Order can make tyrants out of those who merely aspire to clear up a mess. The beauty of tidiness is used as a justification for despotism.[1]

Huxley explained that, “The future dictator’s subjects will be painlessly regimented by a corps of highly trained social engineers,” and he quotes one “advocate of this new science” as saying that, “The challenge of social engineering in our time is like the challenge of technical engineering fifty years ago. If the first half of the twentieth century was the era of technical engineers, the second half may well be the era of social engineers.” Thus, proclaims Huxley, **“The twenty-first century, I suppose, will be the era of World Controllers, the scientific caste system and Brave New World.”**[2]

In 1952, Bertrand Russell, a British philosopher, historian, mathematician, and social critic wrote the book, “The Impact of Science on Society,” in which he warned and examined how science, and the technological revolution, was changing and would come to change society. In his book, Russell explained that:

I think the subject which will be of most importance politically is mass psychology. Mass psychology is, scientifically speaking, not a very advanced study... This study is immensely useful to practical men, whether they wish to become rich or to acquire the government. It is, of course, as a science, founded upon individual psychology, but hitherto it has employed rule-of-thumb methods which were based upon a kind of intuitive common sense. **Its importance has been enormously increased by the growth of modern methods of propaganda. Of these the most influential is what is called ‘education’.** Religion plays a part, though a diminishing one; the Press, the cinema and the radio play an increasing part.

What is essential in mass psychology is the art of persuasion. If you compare a speech of Hitler’s with a speech of (say) Edmund Burke, you will see what strides have been made in the art since the eighteenth century. What went wrong formerly was that people had read in books that man is a rational animal, and framed their arguments on this hypothesis. We now know that limelight and a brass band do more to persuade than can be done by the most elegant train of syllogisms. **It may be hoped that in time anybody will be able to persuade anybody of anything if he can catch the patient young and is provided by the State with money and equipment.**

This subject will make great strides when it is taken up by scientists under a scientific dictatorship.[3]

Russell went on to analyze the question of whether a ‘scientific dictatorship’ is more stable than a democracy, on which he postulated:

Apart from the danger of war, I see no reason why such a regime should be unstable. After all, most civilised and semi-civilised countries known to history have had a large class of slaves or serfs completely subordinate to their owners. There is nothing in human nature that makes the persistence of such a system impossible. And **the whole development of scientific technique has made it easier than it used to be to maintain a despotic rule of a minority.** When the government controls the distribution of food, its power is absolute so long as it can count on the police and the armed forces. And their loyalty can be secured by giving them some of the privileges of the governing class. **I do not see how any internal movement of revolt can ever bring freedom to the oppressed in a modern scientific dictatorship.**[4]

Drawing on the concept popularized by Aldous Huxley – of people loving their servitude – Bertrand Russell explained that under a scientific dictatorship:

It is to be expected that **advances in physiology and psychology will give governments much more control over individual mentality than they now have even in totalitarian countries.** Fichte laid it down that **education should aim at destroying free will**, so that, after pupils have left school, they shall be incapable, throughout the rest of their lives, of thinking or acting otherwise than as their schoolmasters would have wished... Diet, injections, and injunctions will combine, from a very early age, **to produce the sort of character and the sort of beliefs that the authorities consider desirable, and any serious criticism of the powers that be will become psychologically impossible. Even if all are miserable, all will believe themselves happy, because the government will tell them that they are so.**[5]

Russell explained that, “The completeness of the resulting control over opinion depends in various ways upon scientific technique. Where all children go to school, and all schools are controlled by the government, **the authorities can close the minds of the young to everything contrary to official orthodoxy.**”[6] Russell later proclaimed in his book that, “**a scientific world society cannot be stable unless there is a world government.**”[7] He elaborated:

Unless there is a world government which secures universal birth control, there must be from time to time great wars, in which the penalty of defeat is widespread death by starvation. That is exactly the present state of the world, and some may hold that there is no reason why it should not continue for centuries. I do not myself believe that this is possible. **The two great wars that we have experienced have lowered the level of civilization in many parts of the world, and the next is pretty sure to achieve much more in this direction. Unless, at some stage, one power or group of powers emerges**

victorious and proceeds to establish a single government of the world with a monopoly of armed force, it is clear that the level of civilization must continually decline until scientific warfare becomes impossible – that is until science is extinct.[8]

Russell explains that eugenics plays a central feature in the construction of any world government scientific dictatorship, stating that, “Gradually, by selective breeding, **the congenital differences between rulers and ruled will increase until they become almost different species. A revolt of the plebs would become as unthinkable as an organized insurrection of sheep against the practice of eating mutton.**”[9]

In a 1962 speech at UC Berkeley, Aldous Huxley spoke about the real world becoming the ‘Brave New World’ nightmare he envisaged. Huxley spoke primarily of the ‘Ultimate Revolution’ that focuses on ‘behavioural controls’ of people. Huxley said of the ‘Ultimate Revolution’:

In the past, we can say, that **all revolutions have essentially aimed at changing the environment in order to change the individual**. There’s been the political revolution, the economic revolution . . . the religious revolution. All these aimed as I say not directly at the human being but at his surroundings, so by modifying his surroundings you did achieve – at one remove – an effect upon the human being.

Today, we are faced, I think, with the approach of what may be called the ‘Ultimate Revolution’ – the ‘Final Revolution’ – where man can act directly on the mind-body of his fellows. Well needless to say some kind of direct action on human mind-bodies has been going on since the beginning of time, but this has generally been of a violent nature. The techniques of terrorism have been known from time immemorial, and people have employed them with more-or-less ingenuity, sometimes with utmost crudity, sometimes with a good deal of skill acquired with a process of trial and error – finding out what the best ways of using torture, imprisonments, constraints of various kinds . . .

If you are going to control any population for any length of time, you must have some measure of consent. It’s exceedingly difficult to see how pure terrorism can function indefinitely, it can function for a fairly long time; **but sooner or later you have to bring in an element of persuasion, an element of getting people to consent to what is happening to them**.

Well it seems to me the nature of the Ultimate Revolution with which we are now faced is precisely this: that **we are in process of developing a whole series of techniques, which will enable the controlling oligarchy – who have always existed and will presumably always exist – to get people to love their servitude**. This is the ultimate in malevolent revolution...

There seems to be a general movement in the direction of this kind of Ultimate Control, this method of control, by which **people can be made to enjoy a state of affairs by which any decent standard they ought not to enjoy; the enjoyment of servitude . . .**

I am inclined to think that the scientific dictatorships of the future – and I think there are going to be scientific dictatorships in many parts of the world – will be probably a good deal nearer to the Brave New World pattern than to the 1984 pattern. They will be a good deal nearer, not because of any humanitarian qualms in the scientific dictators, but simply because the ‘brave new world’ pattern is probably a good deal more efficient than the other. **That if you can get people to consent to the state of affairs in which they are living – the state of servitude – if you can do this, then you are likely to have a much more stable, a much more lasting society; much more easily controllable society** than you would if you were relying wholly on clubs, and firing squads and concentration camps.[10]

In 1961, President Eisenhower delivered his farewell address to the nation in which he warned of the dangers to democracy posed by the military-industrial complex: the interconnected web of industry, the military, and politics creating the conditions for constant war. In that same speech, Eisenhower warned America and the world of another important change in society:

Today, the solitary inventor, tinkering in his shop, has been overshadowed by task forces of scientists in laboratories and testing fields. In the same fashion, **the free university, historically the fountainhead of free ideas and scientific discovery, has experienced a revolution in the conduct of research. Partly because of the huge costs involved, a government contract becomes virtually a substitute for intellectual curiosity.** For every old blackboard there are now hundreds of new electronic computers.

The prospect of domination of the nation's scholars by Federal employment, project allocations, and the power of money is ever present – and is gravely to be regarded.

Yet, in holding scientific research and discovery in respect, as we should, **we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite.**[11]

In 1970, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote about “the gradual appearance of a more controlled and directed society,” in the “technetronic revolution”; explaining:

Such a society would be dominated by an elite whose claim to political power would rest on allegedly superior scientific know-how. Unhindered by the restraints of traditional liberal values, **this elite would not hesitate to achieve its political ends by using the latest modern techniques for influencing public behavior and keeping society under close surveillance and control.** Under such circumstances, the scientific and technological momentum of the country would not be reversed but would actually feed on the situation it exploits.[12]

New Eugenics

Many sciences and large social movements are directed by the same foundations and money that financed the eugenics movement in the early 20th century. The Rockefeller foundations, Ford, Carnegie, Mellon, Harriman, and Morgan money that flowed into eugenics led directly to ‘scientific racism,’ and ultimately the Holocaust in World War II.[13] Following the Holocaust, Hitler had discredited the eugenics movement he admired so much in America. So the movement branched off into forming several other social engineering projects: population control, genetics, and environmentalism. The same foundations that laid the foundations for eugenic ideology – the belief in a biological superiority and right to rule (justifying their power) – then laid the foundations for these and other new social and scientific movements.

Major environmental and conservation organizations were founded with Rockefeller and Ford Foundation money,[14] which then continued to be central sources of funding to this day; while the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) was founded in 1961 by Sir Julian Huxley, Aldous Huxley’s brother, who was also the President of the British Eugenics Society. Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands became the organization’s first president. Prince Bernhard also happened to be one of the founders of the elite global think tank, the Bilderberg Group, which he co-founded in 1954; and he was previous to that, a member of the Nazi Party and an SS officer.[15] Sir Julian Huxley also happened to be the first Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). In 1946, Huxley wrote a paper titled, “UNESCO: Its Purpose and its Philosophy.” In it, he wrote that the general focus of UNESCO:

is to help the emergence of a single world culture, with its own philosophy and background of ideas, and with its own broad purpose. This is opportune, since **this is the first time in history that the scaffolding and the mechanisms for world unification have become available**, and also the first time that man has had the means (in the shape of scientific discovery and its applications) of laying a world-wide foundation for the minimum physical welfare of the entire human species...[16]

At the moment, it is probable that the indirect effect of civilisation is dysgenic instead of eugenic; and in any case it seems likely that the dead weight of genetic stupidity, physical weakness, mental instability, and disease-proneness, which already exist in the human species, will prove too great a burden for real progress to be achieved. **Thus even though it is quite true that any radical eugenic policy will be for many years politically and psychologically impossible, it will be important for Unesco to see that the eugenic problem is examined with the greatest care, and that the public mind is informed of the issues at stake so that much that now is unthinkable may at least become thinkable...**[17]

Still another and quite different type of borderline subject is that of eugenics. It has been on the borderline between the scientific and the unscientific, constantly in danger of becoming a pseudo- science based on preconceived political ideas or on assumptions of racial or class superiority and inferiority. **It is, however, essential that eugenics should be brought entirely within the borders of science, for, as already indicated, in the not very remote future the problem of improving the average quality of human beings is likely to become urgent; and this can only be accomplished by applying the findings of a truly scientific eugenics...**[18]

It is worth pointing out that the applications of science at once bring us up against social problems of various sorts. Some of these are direct and obvious. Thus the application of genetics in eugenics immediately raises the question of values - **what qualities should we desire to encourage in the human beings of the future?**[19]

On page 6 of the UNESCO document, Sir Julian Huxley wrote that, “in order to carry out its work, an organisation such as Unesco needs not only a set of general aims and objects for itself, but also **a working philosophy, a working hypothesis concerning human existence and its aims and objects**, which will dictate, or at least indicate, a definite line of approach to its problems.”[20] While much of the language of equality and education sounds good and benevolent, it is based upon a particular view of humanity as an irrational, emotionally driven organism which needs to be controlled. Thus, the ‘principle of equality’ becomes “The Fact of Inequality”:

Finally we come to a difficult problem-that of discovering **how we can reconcile our principle of human equality with the biological fact of human inequality...** The democratic principle of equality, which is also Unesco’s, is a principle of equality of opportunity-that human beings should be equal before the law, should have equal opportunities for education, for making a living, for freedom of expression and movement and thought. **The biological absence of equality, on the other hand, concerns the natural endowments of man and the fact of genetic difference in regard to them.**

There are instances of biological inequality which are so gross that they cannot be reconciled at all with the principle of equal opportunity. **Thus low-grade mental defectives cannot be offered equality of educational opportunity**, nor are the insane equal with the sane before the law or in respect of most freedoms. However, **the full implications of the fact of human inequality have not often been drawn and certainly need to be brought out here, as they are very relevant to Unesco’s task.**[21]

Many of these “genetic inequalities” revolve around the idea of intellectual superiority: the idea that there is no equality among the intellectually inferior and superior. That inequality is derived from human biology – from genetics; it is a “human fact.” It just so happens that elites who propagate this ideology, also happen to view the masses as intellectually inferior; thus, there can be no social equality in a world with a technological intellectual elite. So eugenics must be employed, as the UNESCO paper explains, to address the issues of raising human welfare to a manageable level; that the time will come where elites will need to address the whole of humanity as a single force, and with a single voice. Eugenics is about the social organization and control of humanity. Ultimately, eugenics is about the engineering of inequality. In genetics, elites found a way to take discrimination down to the DNA.

Genetics as Eugenics

Award-winning author and researcher, Edwin Black, wrote an authoritative history of eugenics in his book, “War Against the Weak,” in which he explained that, “the incremental effort to transform eugenics into human genetics forged an entire worldwide infrastructure,” with the founding of the Institute for Human Genetics in Copenhagen in 1938, led by Tage Kemp, a Rockefeller Foundation eugenicist, and was financed with money from the Rockefeller Foundation.[22] While not abandoning the eugenics goals, the new re-branded eugenics movement “claimed to be eradicating poverty and saving the environment.”[23]

In a 2001 issue of Science Magazine, Garland Allen, a scientific historian, wrote about genetics as a modern form of eugenics. He began by citing a 1998 article in Time Magazine which proclaimed that, “Personality, temperament, even life choices. New studies show it's mostly in your genes.” Garland explains the implications:

Coat-tailing on major advances in genetic biotechnology, these articles portray genetics as the new "magic bullet" of biomedical science that will solve many of our recurrent social problems. **The implication is that these problems are largely a result of the defective biology of individuals or even racial or ethnic groups.** If aggressive or violent behavior is in the genes, so the argument goes, then **the solution lies in biomedical intervention--gene therapy in the distant future and pharmacotherapy** (replacing the products of defective genes with drug substitutes) in the immediate future.

By promoting such claims, are we heading toward a new version of eugenics? Are we getting carried away with the false promise of a technological fix for problems that really lie in the structure of our society? **My answer to these questions is "yes,"** but with some important qualifications that derive from the different historical and social contexts of the early 1900s and the present...

The term eugenics was coined in 1883 by the Victorian polymath Francis Galton, geographer, statistician, and first cousin of Charles Darwin. It meant to him "truly- or well-born," and referred to **a plan to encourage the "best people" in society to have more children (positive eugenics) and to discourage or prevent the "worst elements" of society from having many, if any, children (negative eugenics).** Eugenics became solidified into a movement in various countries throughout the world in the first three decades of the 20th century, but nowhere more solidly than in the United States and, after World War I, in Germany.[24]

While genetic traits such as eye colour and the like were proven to be hereditary, "eugenicists were more interested in the inheritance of social behaviors, intelligence, and personality." Further:

American eugenicists also strove to disseminate the results of eugenic research to the public and to lawmakers. They supported the idea of positive eugenics [encouraging the 'best' to become better], but focused most of their energies on negative eugenics [to encourage the 'worst' to become fewer]. Eugenicists wrote hundreds of articles for popular magazines, published dozens of books for the general (and some for the scientific) reader, prepared exhibits for schools and state fairs, made films, and wrote sermons and novels.[25]

American eugenicists, fully backed by the financial support of the major American philanthropic fortunes, passed eugenics legislation in over 27 states across the United States, often in the form of forced sterilizations for the mentally 'inferior', so that, "By the 1960s, when most of these laws were beginning to be repealed, more than 60,000 people had been sterilized for eugenic purposes." As Garland Allen wrote:

For the wealthy benefactors that supported eugenics, such as the Carnegie, Rockefeller, Harriman, and Kellogg philanthropies, **eugenics provided a means of social control in a period of unprecedented upheaval and violence. It was these same economic elites and their business interests who introduced scientific management and organizational control into the industrial sector...**

[In 1994] we saw the resurrection of claims that there are genetic differences in intelligence between races, leading to different socio-economic status. **Claims about the genetic basis for criminality, manic depression, risk-taking, alcoholism, homosexuality, and a host of other behaviors have also been rampant in scientific and especially popular literature.** Much of the evidence for such claims is as controversial today as in the past.

We seem to be increasingly unwilling to accept what we view as imperfection in ourselves and others. As health care costs skyrocket, we are coming to accept a bottom-line, cost-benefit analysis of human life. This mind-set has serious implications for reproductive decisions. If a health maintenance organization (HMO) requires in utero screening, and refuses to cover the birth or care of a purportedly "defective" child, how close is this to eugenics? If gene or drug therapy is substituted for improving our workplace or school environments, our diets and our exercise practices, how close is this to eugenics? Significant social changes are expensive, however. **If eugenics means making reproductive decisions primarily on the basis of social cost, then we are well on that road.**[26]

Genetics unleash an unprecedented power into human hands: the power of unnatural creation and the manipulation of biology. We do not yet fully understand nor comprehend the implications of genetic manipulation in our food, plants, animals, and in humans, themselves. What is clear is that we are changing the very biology of our environment and

ourselves in it. While there are many clear and obvious benefits to genetic technology, such as the ability to enhance ailing senses (sight, hearing, etc.) and cure diseases, the positive must be examined and discussed with the negative repercussions of genetic manipulation so as to better direct the uses of this powerful technology.

Debates on issues such as stem-cell research and genetic manipulation often focus on a science versus religion aspect, where science seeks to benevolently cure mankind of its ailments and religion seeks to preserve the sanctity of 'creation'. This is an irrational and narrow manner to conduct a real debate on this monumental issue, painting the issue as black and white, which it most certainly is not. Science can be used for good as well as bad, and human history, most especially that of the 20th century, is nothing if not evidence for that fact. Incredible scientific ingenuity went into the creation of great weapons; the manipulation of the atom to kill millions in an instant, or the manufacturing of biological and chemical weapons. The problem with the interaction of science and power is that with such great power comes the temptation to use and abuse it. If the ability to create a weapon like an atom bomb seems possible, most certainly there are those who seek to make it probable. Where there is temptation, there is human weakness.

So while genetics can be used for benevolent purposes and for the betterment of humankind, so too can it be used to effectively create a biological caste system, where in time it would be feasible to see a break in the human race, where as human advancement technologies become increasingly available, their use is reserved to the elite so that there comes a time where there is a biological separation in the human species. Oliver Curry, an evolutionary theorist from the London School of Economics predicted that "the human race will have reached its physical peak by the year 3000" and that, "The human race will one day split into two separate species, an attractive, intelligent ruling elite and an underclass of dim-witted, ugly goblin-like creatures." [27] Such was the plot of H.G. Wells' classic book, "The Time Machine," who was himself, a prominent eugenicist at the turn of the 20th century. While this would be a long time from now, its potential results from the decisions we make today.

Population Control as Eugenics

Not only was the field of genetics born of eugenics, and heavily financed by the same monied-interests that seek social control; but so too was the field of population control. In environmental literature and rhetoric, one concept that has emerged over the years as playing a significant part is that of population control. Population is seen as an environmental issue because the larger the population, the more resources it consumes and land it occupies. In this concept, the more people there are the worse the environment becomes. Thus, programs aimed at controlling population growth are often framed in an environmentalist lens. There is also a distinctly radical element in this field, which views population growth not simply as an environmental concern, but which frames people, in general, as a virus that must be eradicated if the earth is to survive.

However, in the view of elites, population control is more about controlling the people than saving the environment. Elites have always been drawn to population studies that have, in many areas, helped construct their worldview. Concerns about population growth really took hold with Thomas Malthus at the end of the 18th century. In 1798, Malthus wrote a "theory on the nature of poverty," and he "called for population control by moral restraint," citing charity as a promotion of "generation-to-generation poverty and simply made no sense in the natural scheme of human progress." Thus, the idea of 'charity' became immoral. The eugenics movement attached itself to Malthus' theory regarding the "rejection of the value of helping the poor." [28]

The ideas of Malthus, and later Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin were remolded into branding an elite ideology of "Social Darwinism", which was "the notion that in the struggle to survive in a harsh world, many humans were not only less worthy, many were actually destined to wither away as a rite of progress. To preserve the weak and the needy was, in essence, an unnatural act." [29] This theory simply justified the immense wealth, power and domination of a small elite over the rest of humanity, as that elite saw themselves as the only truly intelligent beings worthy of holding such power and privilege.

Francis Galton later coined the term "eugenics" to describe this emerging field. His followers believed that the 'genetically unfit' "would have to be wiped away," using tactics such as, "segregation, deportation, castration, marriage prohibition, compulsory sterilization, passive euthanasia – and ultimately extermination." [30] The actual science of eugenics was

lacking extensive evidence, and ultimately Galton “hoped to recast eugenics as a religious doctrine,” which was “to be taken on faith without proof.”[31]

As the quest to re-brand “eugenics” was under way, a 1943 edition of Eugenical News published an article titled “Eugenics After the War,” which cited Charles Davenport, a major founder and progenitor of eugenics, in his vision of “a new mankind of biological castes with master races in control and slave races serving them.”[32] A 1946 article in Eugenical News stated that, **“Population, genetics, [and] psychology, are the three sciences to which the eugenicist must look for the factual material on which to build an acceptable philosophy of eugenics and to develop and defend practical eugenics proposals.”**[33]

In the post-war period, emerging in the 1950s and going into the 1960s, the European colonies were retracting as nations of the ‘Third World’ were gaining political independence. This reinforced support for population control in many circles, as “For those who benefited most from the global status quo, population control measures were a far more palatable alternative to ending Third World poverty or promoting genuine economic development.”[34]

In 1952, “John D. Rockefeller 3rd convened a group of scientists to discuss the implications of the dramatic demographic change. They met in Williamsburg, Virginia, under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences, and after two and a half days agreed on the need for a new institution that could provide solid science to guide governments and individuals in addressing population questions.”[35] That new institution was to become the Population Council. Six of the Council’s ten founding members were eugenicists.[36]

According to the Population Council’s website, it “did not itself espouse any form of population policy. Instead, through grants to individuals and institutions, it invested in strengthening the indigenous capacity of countries and regions to conduct population research and to develop their own policies. The Council also funded seminal work in U.S. universities and further developed its own in-house research expertise in biomedicine, public health, and social science.”[37]

In 2008, Matthew Connelly, a professor at Columbia University, wrote a book called, “Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population,” in which he critically analyzes the history of the population control movement. He documents the rise of the field through the eugenics movement:

In 1927 a Rockefeller-funded study of contraception sought “some simple measure which will be available for the wife of the slum-dweller, the peasant, or the coolie, though dull of mind.” In 1935 one representative told India’s Council of State that population control was a necessity for the masses, adding that “it is not what they want, but what is good for them.” The problem with the natives was that “they are born too much and they don’t die enough,” a public-health official in French Indochina stated in 1936.[38]

Connelly’s general thesis was “how some people have long tried to redesign world population by reducing the fertility of other’s.” Further:

Connelly examines population control as a global transnational movement because its main advocates and practitioners aimed to reduce world population through global governance and often viewed national governments as a means to this end. Fatal Misconceptions is therefore an intricate account of networks of influential individuals, international organizations, NGOs, and national governments.[39]

As one review in the Economist pointed out, “Much of the evil done in the name of slowing population growth had its roots in an uneasy coalition between feminists, humanitarians and environmentalists, who wished to help the unwillingly fecund, and the racists, eugenicists and militarists who wished to see particular patterns of reproduction, regardless of the desires of those involved.” The Economist further wrote:

As the world population soared, the population controllers came to believe they were fighting a war, and there would be collateral damage. Millions of intra-uterine contraceptive devices were exported to poor countries although they were known to cause infections and sterility. **“Perhaps the individual patient is expendable in the general scheme of things,”** said a participant at a conference on the devices organised in 1962 by the Population Council, a research institute founded

by John D. Rockefeller, "particularly if the infection she acquires is sterilising but not lethal." In 1969 Robert McNamara, then president of the World Bank, said he was reluctant to finance health care "unless it was very strictly related to population control, because usually health facilities contributed to the decline of the death rate, and thereby to the population explosion." [40]

A review in the New York Review of Books pointed out that this movement coincided a great deal with the feminist movement in advancing women's reproductive rights. However, "these benefits were seen by many US family planning officials as secondary to the goal of reducing the absolute numbers of people in developing countries. The urgency of what came to be known as the "population control movement" contributed to a climate of coercion and led to a number of serious human rights abuses, especially in Asian countries." [41] Dominic Lawson, writing a review of Connelly's book for The Sunday Times, explained that:

the population-control movement was bankrolled by America's biggest private fortunes - the Ford family foundation, John D Rockefeller III, and Clarence Gamble (of Procter & Gamble). These gentlemen shared not just extreme wealth but a common anxiety: the well-to-do and clever (people like them, obviously) were now having much smaller families than their ancestors, but the great unwashed - Chinamen! Indians! Negroes! - were reproducing themselves in an irresponsible manner. What they feared was a kind of Darwinism in reverse - the survival of the unfittest. [42]

As the New Scientist reported, while contraceptives and women's fertility rights were being expanded, "For much of the past half-century, population control came first and human rights had to be sacrificed." Further, the New Scientist wrote that Connelly "lays bare the dark secrets of **an authoritarian neo-Malthusian ethos that created an international population agenda built around control.**" One such horrific notion was "the official policies that made it acceptable to **hand out food aid to famine victims only if the women agreed to be sterilized.**" [43] In a sad irony, this seemingly progressive movement for women's rights actually had the effect of resulting in a humanitarian disaster, disproportionately affecting women of the developing world.

In 1968, biologist Paul Ehrlich wrote his widely influential book, 'The Population Bomb,' "in which he predicted that global overpopulation would cause massive famines as early as the 1970s." [44] In his book, he refers to mankind as a "cancer" upon the world:

A cancer is an uncontrolled multiplication of cells; the population explosion is an uncontrolled multiplication of people. Treating only the symptoms of cancer may make the victim more comfortable at first, but eventually he dies - often horribly. A similar fate awaits a world with a population explosion if only the symptoms are treated. We must shift our efforts from treatment of the symptoms to the cutting out of the cancer. The operation will demand many apparent brutal and heartless decisions. The pain may be intense. But the disease is so far advanced that only with radical surgery does the patient have a chance to survive. [45]

The American political elite fully embraced this population paradigm of viewing the world and relations with the rest of the world. President Lyndon Johnson was quoted as saying, "I'm not going to piss away foreign aid in nations where they refuse to deal with their own population problems," while his successor, Richard Nixon, was quoted as saying, "population control is a must ... population control must go hand in hand with aid." [46] Robert McNamara, President of the World Bank and former Secretary of Defense in the Johnson administration, said that he opposed World Bank programs financing health care "unless it was very strictly related to population control, because usually health facilities contributed to the decline of the death rate, and thereby to the population explosion." [47]

Ehrlich was also influential in tracking India's rapid population growth into the 1970s. The rapid population growth in India was attributed at the time to the result of the public health system the British had set up under the colonial government, as well as the fact that, as a means to maintaining a relationship of dependence with Britain, the British had discouraged industrialization in India. As famine was around the corner in India, President "Johnson used food aid to pressure the Indian government to meet its family planning targets," and "By the early 1970s, Bangladesh was spending one third of its entire health budget on family planning and India was spending 60 percent." [48] Further:

[B]etween the 1960s and 1980s, millions of people in India and other Asian countries were sterilized or had IUDs [intrauterine devices], as well as other contraceptives, inserted in unhygienic conditions. Numerous cases of uterine perforation, excessive bleeding, infections, and even death were reported.[49]

The Population Council knowingly sent un-sterile IUDs to India, and in the 1970s, nearly half a million women in forty-two developing countries were treated with defective IUDs that “heightened the risk of infection and uterine perforation,” after the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) had “quietly bought up thousands of the devices at a discount for distribution overseas.” Then sterilization was introduced as a means for “keeping the quotas” on population control in India, as **“sterilization was made a condition for receiving land allocations and water for irrigation, as well as electricity, rickshaw licenses, and medical care.”** A Swedish diplomat touring a Swedish/World Bank population program at the time was quoted as saying, “Obviously the stories... on how young and unmarried men are more or less dragged to the sterilization premises are true in far too many cases.”[50]

In 1967, the UN Fund for Population Activities was created, and in 1971, “the General Assembly acknowledged that UNFPA [United Nations Population Fund] should play a leading role within the UN system in promoting population programmes.”[51] In 1970, Nixon created the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, known as the Rockefeller Commission, for its chairman, John D. Rockefeller 3rd. In 1972, the final report was delivered to Nixon.

Among the members of the Commission (besides Rockefeller) were David E. Bell, Vice President of the Ford Foundation, and Bernard Berelson, President of the Population Council. Among the conclusions were that, “Population growth is one of the major factors affecting the demand for resources and the deterioration of the environment in the United States. The further we look into the future, the more important population becomes,” and that, “From an environmental and resource point of view, there are no advantages from further growth.” Further, the report warned:

The American future cannot be isolated from what is happening in the rest of the world. There are serious problems right now in the distribution of resources, income, and wealth, among countries. World population growth is going to make these problems worse before they get better. The United States needs to undertake much greater efforts to understand these problems and develop international policies to deal with them.[52]

In 1974, National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 200 was issued under the direction of US National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, otherwise known as “Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests.” Among the issues laid out in the memorandum was that, “Growing populations will have a serious impact on the need for food especially in the poorest, fastest growing LDCs [Lesser Developed Countries],” and “The most serious consequence for the short and middle term is the possibility of massive famines in certain parts of the world, especially the poorest regions.” Further, “rapid population growth presses on a fragile environment in ways that threaten longer-term food production.” The report plainly stated that, “there is a major risk of severe damage to world economic, political, and ecological systems and, as these systems begin to fail, to our humanitarian values.”[53]

The memorandum lays out key policy recommendations for dealing with the “crisis” of overpopulation. They stated that “our aim should be for the world to achieve a replacement level of fertility, (a two-child family on the average), by about the year 2000,” and that this strategy “will require vigorous efforts by interested countries, U.N. agencies and other international bodies to make it effective [and] U.S. leadership is essential.” They suggested a concentration on specific countries: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Mexico, Indonesia, Brazil, the Philippines, Thailand, Egypt, Turkey, Ethiopia and Colombia.[54]

They recommended the “Integration of population factors and population programs into country development planning,” as well as “Increased assistance for family planning services, information and technology,” and “Creating conditions conducive to fertility decline.” The memorandum even specifically mentioned that, “We must take care that our activities should not give the appearance to the LDCs [Lesser Developed Countries] of an industrialized country policy directed against the LDCs.”[55] Essentially, NSSM 200 made population control a key strategy in US foreign policy, specifically related to aid and development. In other words, it was eugenics as foreign policy.

In 1975, Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, declared martial law. Her son Sanjay was appointed as the nation's chief population controller. Sanjay "proceeded to flatten slums and then tell the residents that they could get a new house if they would agree to be sterilized. Government officials were given sterilization quotas. Within a year, six million Indian men and two million women were sterilized. At least 2,000 Indians died as a result of botched sterilization operations." However, the following year there was an election, and Indira Gandhi's government was thrown out of power, with that issue playing a major factor.[56]

Next, however, China became the major focus of the population control movement, which "offered technical assistance to China's "one child" policy of 1978-83, even helping to pay for computers that allowed Chinese officials to track "birth permits," the official means by which the government banned families from having more than one child and required the aborting of additional children."[57] Further:

Even China's draconian population programs received some support in the 1980s from the US-funded International Planned Parenthood Federation and the UN Population Fund. Before China launched its infamous "One Child Policy," concerns were being raised about its "voluntary" family planning program. In 1981, Chinese and American newspapers reported that **"vehicles transporting Cantonese women to hospitals for abortions were 'filled with wailing noises.' Some pregnant women were reportedly 'handcuffed, tied with ropes or placed in pig's baskets.'"**

After 1983, coercion became official Chinese policy. "All women with one child were to be inserted with a stainless-steel, tamper-resistant IUD, all parents with two or more children were to be sterilized, and all unauthorized pregnancies aborted," according to the One Child Policy. During this time, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the UN Population Fund continued to support China's nongovernmental Family Planning Association, even though some of its top officials also worked for the government.[58]

The UN was not a passive participant in population control measures, as it actively supported these harsh programs, and in many cases, rewarded governments for their vicious tactics in reducing population growth:

In 1983, Xinzhong Qian and Indira Gandhi were awarded the first United Nations Population Award to recognize and reward their accomplishments in limiting the population growth in China and India in the previous decade. During the 1970s, officials in these countries had launched extremely ambitious population programs that were supposed to improve the quality of the population and halt its growth. **The measures used were harsh. For example, slum clearance resulting in the eradication of whole urban neighbourhoods and the widespread sterilization of their inhabitants was an important part of India's 'Emergency' campaign. In Delhi, hundreds of thousands of people were driven from their homes in events that resulted in numerous clashes, arrests, and deaths, while a total of eight million sterilizations were recorded in India in 1976.**[59]

Horrifically, "between the 1960s and 1980s, millions of people in India and other Asian countries were sterilized or had IUDs, as well as other contraceptives, inserted in unhygienic conditions. **Numerous cases of uterine perforation, excessive bleeding, infections, and even death were reported,** but these programs made little effort to treat these conditions, or even determine their frequency, so we don't know precisely how common they were."[60]

In the late 1980s, revelations in Brazil uncovered the NSSM 200 in Brazil since its implementation in 1975 under the Ford Presidency. An official government investigation was launched, and it was discovered that, **"an estimated 44% of all Brazilian women aged between 14 and 55 had been permanently sterilized."** Further, the programs of sterilization, undertaken by a number of international organizations, were coordinated under the guidance of USAID.[61]

At the UN's 1994 World Population Conference in Cairo, Third World delegates to the conference emphasized the need for development policies as opposed to demographic policies; that the focus must be on development, not population. This was essentially a setback for the radical population control movement; however, it wasn't one they couldn't work around. There was still a great deal of support among Western elites and co-opted developing world elites for the aims of population control. As Connelly articulated:

It appealed to the rich and powerful because, with the spread of emancipatory movements and the integration of markets, it began to appear easier and more profitable to control populations than to control territory. That's why opponents were correct in viewing it as another chapter in the unfinished history of imperialism.[62]

It was around this point that the population control movement, while continuing on its overall aims of curbing population growth of Third World nations, began to further merge itself with the environmental movement. While always working alongside the environmental movement, this period saw the emergence of a more integrated approach to policy agendas.

Environmentalism as Eugenics

Michael Barker extensively covered the connection between the Rockefeller and Ford foundations in funding the environmental movement in the academic journal, *Capitalism Nature Socialism*. As Barker noted, following World War II, the public became increasingly concerned with the environment as the "chemical-industrial complex" grew at an astounding rate.[63] Since Rockefeller interests were heavily involved in the chemical industry, the rising trend in environmental thought and concern had to quickly be controlled and steered in a direction favourable to elite interests.

Two important organizations in shaping the environmental movement were the Conservation Foundation and Resources for the Future, which largely relied upon Rockefeller and Ford Foundation funding, and both conservation organizations had interestingly helped to "launch an explicitly pro-corporate approach to resource conservation." [64] Laurance Rockefeller served as a trustee of the Conservation Foundation, and donated \$50,000 yearly throughout the 50s and 60s. Further, the Conservation Foundation was founded by Fairfield Osborn, whose cousin, Frederick Osborn, became another prominent voice in conservation.[65] Frederick Osborn was also working with the Rockefeller's Population Council and was President of the American Eugenics Society.

In 1952, the Ford Foundation created the organization Resources for the Future (RFF), (the same year that the Rockefellers created the Population Council), and the original founders were also "John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s chief advisors on conservation matters." Laurance Rockefeller joined the board of the RFF in 1958, and the RFF got \$500,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1970.[66] The Ford Foundation would also go on to create the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.[67] McGeorge Bundy, who was President of the Ford Foundation from 1966 until 1979, once stated that, "everything the foundation did could be regarded as 'making the world safe for capitalism'." [68]

Certainly one of the pre-eminent, if not the most prominent environmental organizations in the world is the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF). The WWF was founded on September 11, 1961, by Sir Julian Huxley, the first Director General of the UN organization, UNESCO.[69] Sir Julian Huxley was also a life trustee of the British Eugenics Society from 1925, and its President from 1959-62. In the biography of Julian Huxley on the British Eugenics Society's website (now known as the Galton Institute – a genetics research center), it stated that, "Huxley believed that eugenics would one day be seen as the way forward for the human race," and that, "**A catastrophic event may be needed for evolution to move at an accelerated pace**, as the extinction of the dinosaurs gave the mammals their chance to take over the world. It is much the same with ideas whose time has not yet come; they must survive periods when they are not generally welcome. Like the small mammals in dinosaur times they must await their opportunity." [70]

In 1962, Rachel Carson, an American marine biologist, published her seminal work, *Silent Spring*, which has long been credited with helping launch the modern environmental movement. Her book was largely based around the criticism of pesticides as harmful to the environment and human and animal health. Of particular note, she is seen as being the starting force for the campaign against DDT. Carson died in 1964, but her legacy was set in stone by the emerging environmental movement.

The Environmental Defense Fund was founded in 1967 with the specific aim to ban DDT. Some of its initial funding came from the Ford Foundation.[71] This also spurred the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), an official US government agency, in 1970. In 1972, the EPA banned the use of DDT in the United States. Since this time, "DDT prohibitions have been expanded and enforced by NGO pressure, coercive treaties, and threats of economic sanctions by foundations, nations and international aid agencies." [72]

DDT is widely regarded as a carcinogen, and most have never questioned the banning of DDT until understanding the effects of DDT usage beyond the environmental aspect. In particular, we need to look at Africa to understand the significant role of DDT and why we need to re-evaluate its potential usage, weighing the pros and cons of doing so. We must bring in the “human element” and balance that out with the “environmental element” instead of just simply writing off the human aspect to the issue.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said in 2000, that, “malaria infected over 300 million people. It killed nearly 2,000,000 – most of them in sub-Saharan Africa. Over half the victims are children, who die at the rate of two per minute or 3,000 per day,” and that, “Since 1972, over 50 million people have died from this dreaded disease. Many are weakened by AIDS or dysentery, but actually die of malaria.” In 2002 alone, 80,000 Ugandans died from malaria, half of which were children.[73] The fact is, that:

No other chemical comes close to DDT as an affordable, effective way to repel mosquitoes from homes, exterminate any that land on walls, and disorient any that are not killed or repelled, largely eliminating their urge to bite in homes that are treated once or twice a year with tiny amounts of this miracle insecticide.[74]

Donald Roberts, Professor of Tropical Public Health at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences, explained that, “DDT is long-acting; the alternatives are not,” and that, ultimately, when it comes to the issue of poor countries and poor people, “DDT is cheap; the alternatives are not. End of Story.”[75]

Richard Tren, President of Africa Fighting Malaria, said that, “In the 60 years since DDT was first introduced, not a single scientific paper has been able to replicate even one case of actual human harm from its use.” At the end of World War II, DDT was used on nearly every concentration camp survivor to prevent typhus, and the “widespread use of DDT in Europe and the United States played vital roles in eradicating malaria and typhus on both continents.” Further, in 1979, a World Health Organization (WHO) review of DDT use could not find “any possible adverse effects of DDT,” and said it was the “safest pesticide used for residual spraying and vector control programs.”[76]

However, organizations such as the WHO, United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), the World Bank, Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, and a variety of others still remained adamantly opposed to the use of DDT. While DDT is not outright banned, it is extremely difficult to have it used in places like Africa due to funding. The funding for health care and disease-related programs comes largely from western aid agencies and NGOs, and “The US Agency for International Development [USAID] will not fund any indoor residual spraying and neither will most of the other donors,” explained Richard Tren, which “means that most African countries have to use whatever [these donors] are willing to fund (bed nets), which may not be the most appropriate tool.”[77]

A Ugandan Health Minister said in 2002 that, “Our people’s lives are of primary importance. The West is concerned about the environment because we share it with them. But it is not concerned about malaria because it is not a problem there. In Europe, they used DDT to kill anopheles mosquitoes that cause malaria. Why can’t we use DDT to kill the enemy in our camp?”[78]

Michael Crichton, an author and PhD molecular biologist, plainly stated, “Banning DDT is one of the most disgraceful episodes in the twentieth century history of America. We knew better, and we did it anyway, and we let people around the world die, and we didn’t give a damn.” As author Paul Driessen eloquently explained, the West “would never tolerate being told they had to protect their children solely by using bed nets, larvae-eating fish and medicinal treatments. But they have been silent about conditions in Africa, and about the intolerable attitudes of environmental groups, aid agencies and their own government[s].”[79]

James Lovelock, a scientist, researcher, environmentalist and futurist, became famous for popularizing his idea known as the Gaia hypothesis. He first started writing about this theory in journals in the early 1970s, but it shot to fame with the publication of his 1979 book, “Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth.” The general theory is that the Earth acts as a single organism, where all facets interact and react in a particular way that promotes an optimal environment on Earth. Thus, the theory was named after the Greek Earth goddess, Gaia. In the opening paragraph of his book, he stated that, “the quest for

Gaia is an attempt to find the largest living creature on Earth.”[80] His theory provoked a fair amount criticism within the scientific community, with some referring to it as merely a metaphorical description of Earth processes.[81]

Lovelock has also been known to make wild predictive statements. In 2006, he wrote an article for the Independent, in which he stated that, “My Gaia theory sees the Earth behaving as if it were alive, and clearly anything alive can enjoy good health, or suffer disease,” and that the Earth is “seriously ill, and soon to pass into a morbid fever that may last as long as 100,000 years.”[82]

In 2008, the Guardian interviewed Lovelock, who contended that it was “too late” to do anything about global warming, that catastrophe was inevitable, and that, “about 80%” of the world's population [will] be wiped out by 2100.”[83] In August of 2009, Lovelock became a patron of the Optimum Population Trust, a British population control organization. Upon his becoming a patron, he stated that, “**Those who fail to see that population growth and climate change are two sides of the same coin are either ignorant or hiding from the truth. These two huge environmental problems are inseparable and to discuss one while ignoring the other is irrational.**” He added, “How can we possibly decrease carbon emissions and land use while the number of emitters and the space they occupy remorselessly increases? When will the environmentalists who claim to be green recognise the truth and speak out?”[84]

Taxes and trades in carbon and carbon credits virtually commodify our atmosphere, so that the very air we breathe becomes property that is bought and sold. A tax on carbon is a tax on life. Since the lifeblood of an industrial society is oil, this requires carbon emissions in order to develop. The restraints on carbon, particularly the notion of trading carbon credits – i.e., trading the ‘right’ to pollute a certain amount – will disproportionately affect the developing world, which cannot afford to finance its own development. Corporations and banks will trade and own the world’s carbon credits, granting them the exclusive right to pollute and control the world’s resources and environment. The carbon trading market could become twice the size of the world oil market within ten years time.[85]

In regards to the Copenhagen Climate talks, which essentially broke down in December of 2009, the real source of this failure lies in a document that revealed the true nature of the negotiations, referred to as the ‘Danish Text.’ The ‘Danish Text’ was a leaked Danish government document which outlined a draft agreement “that hands more power to rich countries,” as, “The draft **hands effective control of climate change finance to the World Bank**” and “would make any money to help poor countries adapt to climate change **dependent on them taking a range of actions.**”[86] In other words, it becomes the new means of exerting “conditionality” upon the developing, and increasingly the developed world. ‘Conditionality’ implying – of course – a restructuring of society along lines designated by the World Bank.

While these are but examples of the influence and shaping of science to mold society and control humanity, much more discussion and debate is needed on these issues. While science can be used for the benefit of mankind, so too can it be used for the control and oppression of humanity. The people who run our societies view us as needing to be controlled, so they redirect the social apparatus into systems of control and coercion. Science can allow us to understand an idea or organism; but in doing so, it can also allow us to understand how to dominate and control that idea or organism. We must continually engage in a discussion of our changing society to better understand the nature of its changes and how that could affect us both positively and negatively.

If not for the Technological (or ‘Technetronic’) Revolution, elites would not have access to such powerful means of control; but, simultaneously, people have never had such great access to each other through mass communications and the Internet. So while environmental science can allow us to better understand our environment, something we seem still to be very much an adolescent in accomplishing, it also unleashes an ability, and what’s greater – a temptation – to control and shape the environment. Science can be used to both free and imprison the human mind. It is imperative that we approach and discuss the sciences (and all issues) from this perspective, not from a narrow-minded and divisive black-and-white world of ‘left’ and ‘right’, of religion or science. We cannot simply view criticism and opposition to social and scientific endeavours as ‘backwards’, or based on ‘religious doctrine’. There are rational reasons and purposes for criticism and debate on all of these issues, and rational positions of dissent.

Issues like climate change are generally divided upon those who ‘believe’ in climate change, and those who are termed ‘deniers’, which is a disingenuous and divisive approach to rational debate. It silences the critical scientists, who do not get funding from governments or corporations. It classifies those who dissent as ‘deniers’, employing rhetoric like that used against Holocaust deniers, whereas the majority of the dissent within the scientific community comes from those who simply see the role of other forces (often natural) in shaping and changing our climate, such as solar radiation. They do not ‘deny’ climate change, but they dissent on the causes and consequences. Is their opinion not worth hearing? If we are reshaping our entire global political and economic spheres as a result of our supposedly ‘collective’ perception of this issue – as we certainly are – then is it not of the utmost importance that we hear from other voices, especially those of dissent, in order to better understand the issue?

Merging Man and Machine: The Future of Humanity

Eisenhower warned, “The prospect of domination of the nation's scholars by Federal employment, project allocations, and the power of money is ever present – and is gravely to be regarded,” and that, “**we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite.**”[87]

Bill Joy, a computer scientist and co-founder of Sun Microsystems, who was co-chair of the presidential commission on the future of IT research, wrote an article for Wired Magazine in 2000 entitled, “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us.” Joy explained the possibilities in a technological society of the near future, that “new technologies like genetic engineering and nanotechnology were giving us the power to remake the world.” One startling development in the world is that of robot technology and its potential impact upon society. Joy explains:

Accustomed to living with almost routine scientific breakthroughs, we have yet to come to terms with the fact that **the most compelling 21st-century technologies - robotics, genetic engineering, and nanotechnology - pose a different threat than the technologies that have come before.** Specifically, robots, engineered organisms, and nanobots share a dangerous amplifying factor: **They can self-replicate.** A bomb is blown up only once - but one bot can become many, and quickly get out of control.[88]

Joy explains that while these technologies can, and consistently are promoted and justified in the name of doing good (such as curing diseases, etc.), “**with each of these technologies, a sequence of small, individually sensible advances leads to an accumulation of great power and, concomitantly, great danger.**” Joy ominously warns that:

The 21st-century technologies - genetics, nanotechnology, and robotics (GNR) - are so powerful that they can spawn whole new classes of accidents and abuses. **Most dangerously, for the first time, these accidents and abuses are widely within the reach of individuals or small groups. They will not require large facilities or rare raw materials. Knowledge alone will enable the use of them.**

Thus we have the possibility not just of weapons of mass destruction but of knowledge-enabled mass destruction (KMD), this destructiveness hugely amplified by the power of self-replication.

I think it is no exaggeration to say we are on the cusp of the further perfection of extreme evil, an evil whose possibility spreads well beyond that which weapons of mass destruction bequeathed to the nation-states, on to **a surprising and terrible empowerment of extreme individuals.**[89]

In other words: we are entering an era faced with the “scientific dictators” of Huxley’s nightmare vision in ‘Brave New World’. Joy explained that by 2030, “we are likely to be able to build machines, in quantity, a million times as powerful as the personal computers of today.” Thus:

As this enormous computing power is combined with the manipulative advances of the physical sciences and the new, deep understandings in genetics, **enormous transformative power is being unleashed. These combinations open up the opportunity to completely redesign the world,** for better or worse: The replicating and evolving processes that have been confined to the natural world are about to become realms of human endeavor.[90]

Joy examined the transformative nature of robotics, as an intelligent robot may be built by 2030, “And once an intelligent robot exists, it is only a small step to a robot species - to an intelligent robot that can make evolved copies of itself.” Further, “A second dream of robotics is that **we will gradually replace ourselves with our robotic technology, achieving near immortality by downloading our consciousnesses.**” Joy further warns of the potential for an arms race to develop in these technologies, just as took place in the nuclear, radiological and biological weapons of the 20th century.[91]

Joy aptly explained that in the 20th century, those technologies were largely the products of governments, whereas in the 21st century, the new technologies of genetic engineering, nanotechnology and robotics (GNR), are the products of corporations and capitalism. Thus, the driving force is that of competition, desire, and the economic system. Hence, there is far less regulation and discussion of these new technologies than there was of the 20th century technologies, as the new technologies are developed in privately owned labs, not public. Joy often quotes a passage from Kaczynski's Unabomber Manifesto regarding a future dystopia, which Joy feels has “merit in the reasoning.” In the event that human control over machines is retained (as opposed to the machines taking over):

[C]ontrol over large systems of machines will be in the hands of a tiny elite - just as it is today, but with two differences. Due to improved techniques the elite will have greater control over the masses; and because human work will no longer be necessary the masses will be superfluous, a useless burden on the system. If the elite is ruthless they may simply decide to exterminate the mass of humanity. If they are humane they may use propaganda or other psychological or biological techniques to reduce the birth rate until the mass of humanity becomes extinct, leaving the world to the elite.

Or, if the elite consists of soft-hearted liberals, they may decide to play the role of good shepherds to the rest of the human race. They will see to it that everyone's physical needs are satisfied, that all children are raised under psychologically hygienic conditions, that everyone has a wholesome hobby to keep him busy, and that anyone who may become dissatisfied undergoes "treatment" to cure his "problem." Of course, **life will be so purposeless that people will have to be biologically or psychologically engineered** either to remove their need for the power process or make them "sublimate" their drive for power into some harmless hobby. **These engineered human beings may be happy in such a society, but they will most certainly not be free. They will have been reduced to the status of domestic animals.**[92]

A horrifying vision indeed; but one which builds upon the ideas of Huxley, Russell and Brzezinski, who envisioned a people who – through biological and psychological means – are made to love their own servitude. Huxley saw the emergence of a world in which humanity, still a wild animal, is domesticated; where only the elite remain wild and have freedom to make decisions, while the masses are domesticated like pets. Huxley opined that, “**Men and women will grow up to love their servitude and will never dream of revolution. There seems to be no good reason why a thoroughly scientific dictatorship should ever be overthrown.**”[93]

We Can Have a Scientific Dictatorship, or...

We can create an alternative. We use, strengthen, mobilize, decentralize, and mobilize the global political awakening into a global movement of people not simply politically aware, but politically active and engaged. A world where people do not simply observe the apparatus of political, economic and social power influencing their lives; but in which the people actively seek to change it to better suit their lives and their freedom. We need to understand each other better; but to do that, we cannot view each other through the harsh and deceptive lens of power.

To understand each other, we must know each other. People must communicate with one another around the world; ideas must be exchanged between people and discussed, debated, and decided upon; the people must determine their own futures. Take the elites out of the equation: if you do not want them to dominate your lives, do not give them the power to do so. Talk to each other and determine your own polities, economies and societies. Do not entrust dying ideas and diseased institutions to determine your future for you.

The tools and systems of social control are vast and evasive; they penetrate the very psychology and biology of the individual. The elite feel that they are entrusted – due to their supposed ‘innate’ superior intelligence and specialization – to control society and reshape it as they see fit, to actively mold and construct public opinion and ideas. They have a belief

that people are essentially irrational emotional beings, and that they must be controlled by an elite or else the world would be in chaos. This is what underpins the ideas of 'stability' and 'order'. The state has been used to fight every progressive form of change that society has ever developed for its betterment: women's rights, racial rights, civil rights, the anti-war movement, gay rights, etc. Initially, the impulse – the immediate reaction of the state – is to oppress social movements and to suppress human freedoms. This approach often leads to a situation in which social movements are only accepted by the state when they are co-opted by the state or powerful economic forces, which then exert their influence over the state to alter the policy.

If we gain stability and order at the cost of our very humanity, is it worth it? Do we really need this eternal guidance, which has been constant through almost all of human history, to treat the human species as if it was in a constant state of adolescence, never quite prepared to make its own decisions or go out in the world on its own? Well it is time for humanity to grow up, leave the strange comfort of mental authoritarianism. The strive for human autonomy has only just begun; only now is all of humanity politically awakened; only now – and never before – has all of known humanity had such a great and perfect opportunity to remake the world, retake power, re-imagine individuality and revitalize freedom.

Our world is governed not by a conspiracy, but by ideas: ideas of power, money, the state, military, empire, race, religion, sex, gender, politics and people. The only challenge to those ideas, are new ideas. There are roughly 6,000 members of the 'global elite,'[94] there are over 6.8 billion people in the world. That sounds like a lot of potential for new ideas. The greatest resource for the future of humanity is not in the 'control' of humanity, which is doomed to ultimate failure, but for the release and encouragement of the human mind and spirit.

People can understand the science and mechanics of the brain, the functions of psychology, the ability of human strength; but still, today, we do not know how all that biology can create Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Humanity is still very much a mystery to humans, and it would seem likely that the best answers to the questions of 'how should we live?' and 'how should our societies function?' are best answered with the bigger question of 'why are we here'?

If the purpose of people and humanity is to consume and dominate, then our present situation seems only natural. If we were meant for more, then we must become more. If we were meant to be free, we must become free. Ideas are powerful things: they can build empires, and collapse them just as easily.

In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King delivered one of his most moving and important speeches, "Beyond Vietnam," in which he spoke out against war and empire. He left humanity with sobering words:

I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a "thing-oriented" society to a "person-oriented" society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.[95]

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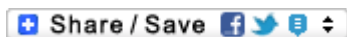
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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:37 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

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Monday, July 5, 2010

Sam Pizzigati: The Million-Dollar Penny

The Million-Dollar Penny

The ultra-rich are splurging again as the rest of us muddle through the Great Recession.

by Sam Pizzigati [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 5, 2010 | OtherWords | CommonDreams

Every summer, several financial firms competing to get the banking business of the world's mega millionaires release what amounts to scorecards on global wealth. These data-packed reports tally the current number of our international rich and super-rich, by nation and region.

World Wealth Report 2010 is the most comprehensive of these scorecards. It's got some fascinating details about the planet's wealthiest of the wealthy, those households worth at least \$30 million--that's not counting their primary residence and "collectibles."

These "ultra-high-net worth" households make up less than 1 percent of the global millionaire total, yet in 2009 and 2008 they held more than a third of combined global millionaire wealth. In other words, the global financial crash that mega-millionaire speculation triggered has ended up concentrating even more wealth in mega millionaire pockets.

The Merrill Lynch and Capgemini researchers who prepared this report also offer some lusciously revealing information about what they call "passion investing," the vast sums the rich plow into everything from country club memberships and yachts to jewelry and fine art.

Global millionaires, they say, "returned to passion investments in 2009," but the overall volume of these passion investments still hasn't rebounded all the way back to pre-financial crash levels.

That complete rebound, the report adds, may come shortly, since "auction houses, luxury goods makers, and high-end service providers all reported signs of renewed demand toward the end of 2009."

One sign of that increased demand: Late last year, an antique penny--a 1795 one-cent piece--went at auction for \$1.3 million. That marked the first time a penny had ever gone for over \$1 million.

This resurgence in "passion investment" illustrates the latest World Wealth Report's overall theme: The global millionaire "segment regained ground despite weakness in the world economy."

We have that weakness because average consumers still don't have the buying capacity to get national economies going again. And those average consumers don't have that buying capacity because income and wealth are getting even more concentrated at the top. An antique penny, thanks to that concentration, can now fetch more than a million dollars.

But imagine if our wealth were more equally shared. Imagine that the \$1.3 million that went for a 1795 penny had been sitting instead in the pockets of average consumers. Over 1,500 of those consumers could have bought brand-new energy-efficient refrigerators with that \$1.3 million.

And what do you suppose would do our economy--and our world--more good, one deep pocket spending \$1.3 million on a penny or 1,500 households buying new energy-efficient refrigerators?

The good folks at Merrill Lynch and Capgemini will most likely never ask that question. We should.

Sam Pizzigati, an Institute for Policy Studies associate fellow, edits [Too Much](#), an online weekly newsletter on excess and inequality.

OtherWorlds [home page](#)
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State of the World's Wealth
World Wealth Report 2010
Capgemini Financial Services [report pdf link](#)

Excerpts:

1 HNWI's are defined as those having investable assets of US\$1 million or more, excluding primary residence, collectibles, consumables, and consumer durables.

2 Ultra-HNWI's are defined as those having investable assets of US\$30 million or more, excluding primary residence, collectibles, consumables, and consumer durables.

The world's population of high net worth individuals (HNWI's¹) grew 17.1% to 10.0 million in 2009, returning to levels last seen in 2007 despite the contraction in world gross domestic product (GDP). Global HNWI wealth similarly recovered, rising 18.9% to US\$39.0 trillion, with HNWI wealth in Asia-Pacific and Latin America actually surpassing levels last seen at the end of 2007.

For the first time ever, the size of the HNWI population in Asia-Pacific was as large as that of Europe (at 3.0 million). This shift in the rankings occurred because HNWI gains in Europe, while sizeable, were far less than those in Asia-Pacific, where the region's economies saw continued robust growth in both economic and market drivers of wealth.

The wealth of Asia-Pacific HNWI's stood at US\$9.7 trillion by the end of 2009, up 30.9%, and above the US\$9.5 trillion in wealth held by Europe's HNWI's. Among Asia-Pacific markets, Hong Kong and India led the pack, rebounding from mammoth declines in their HNWI bases and wealth in 2008 amid an outsized resurgence in their stock markets.

The global HNWI population nevertheless remains highly concentrated. The U.S., Japan and Germany still accounted for 53.5% of the world's HNWI population at the end of 2009, down only slightly from 54.0% in 2008. Australia became the tenth largest home to HNWI's, after overtaking Brazil, due to a considerable rebound.

After losing 24.0% in 2008, Ultra-HNWI's² saw wealth rebound 21.5% in 2009. At the end of 2009, Ultra-HNWI's accounted for 35.5% of global HNWI wealth, up from 34.7%, while representing only 0.9% of the global HNWI population, the same as in 2008.

2009 in Review: Many Drivers of Wealth Rebounded, but Economic Recovery is Still Nascent

World gross domestic product (GDP) contracted 2% in 2009, as the effects of the global financial crisis worked their way deeply into the fundamentals of the global economy. Europe was hit hardest, with GDP shrinking by 4.1% in Western Europe and by 3.7% in Eastern Europe. In Asia-Pacific excluding Japan, however, there was positive GDP growth of 4.5%.

Governments around the world stepped up efforts to stimulate economic recovery and support the financial system. Governments implemented a wide array of measures to try and keep their economies from sliding into recession as financial conditions remained challenging. Those efforts included fiscal stimulus by many nations, but most sizably by the U.S. and China.

Key drivers of wealth experienced strong gains. Many of the world's stock markets recovered, and global market capitalization grew to US\$47.9 trillion in 2009 from US\$32.6 trillion in 2008, up nearly 47%. Commodities prices dropped

early in the year, but rebounded sharply to end the year up nearly 19%. Hedge funds were also able to recoup many of their 2008 losses.

The global economic recovery remains nascent. World GDP growth is likely to be positive in 2010-11 and is expected to be led by Asia-Pacific excluding Japan. However, sustained economic recovery is contingent upon the timely withdrawal of government stimulus along with the return of growth in private consumption.

HNWIs Warily Returned to Markets in 2009 in Cautious Pursuit of Returns

HNW investors cautiously returned to the markets in 2009 as fears over the financial crisis eased. However, they favored predictable returns and cash flow, as evidenced by the rise in HNWI allocations to fixed-income instruments, to 31% from 29%. Equity holdings also rose, to 29% from 25%, as the world's stock markets recovered. Cash holdings declined slightly.

HNWIs overall had proportionally more invested outside their home regions by the end of 2009 than they had a year earlier. This shift countered a widespread trend toward asset repatriation to home regions during the crisis. The decline in home-region investments was most marked in Europe, where such holdings dropped to 59% of overall portfolios from 65% in 2008. Among Latin American HNWIs, by contrast, home-region allocations were up 3 percentage points to 47%. In general, HNWIs' allocations to emerging markets rose overall, and to Asia-Pacific in particular, as investments flowed to regions and markets expected to have the most growth in the coming years.

By 2011, HNWIs are expected to further reduce their home-region investments, and look to those regions in which growth is expected to be more robust. North American HNWIs, who have typically held a large portion of assets in their own region, are shifting those allocations to become more geographically diversified. They are gravitating in particular toward regions in which growth is anticipated, especially Asia-Pacific and Latin America. Home-region allocations are also expected to drop among Europe's HNWIs, who are also likely to invest more in Asia-Pacific.

HNWIs Cautiously Returned to Passion Investments in 2009

As HNWI cautiously returned to financial markets, they also returned to passion investments in 2009. Outright global demand remained weaker than before the crisis in many passion categories, such as luxury collectibles (luxury automobiles, boats, jets), Art, and jewelry, though demand began to grow in the latter half of 2009.

With financial markets still in flux, some HNWIs indicated they are approaching their passion investments as "investor-collectors", seeking out those items that are perceived to have tangible long-term value. The two categories that are most attractive to these "investor-collectors" are Art and Other Collectibles (coins, antiques, wines, etc).

The demand for passion investments overall is expected to increase in 2010 as wealth levels rebound. This is evidenced by the fact that auction houses, luxury goods makers and high-end service providers all reported signs of renewed demand toward the end of 2009, and in the early part of 2010.

HNWIs Demand for Philanthropy-related Advisory Services is Rising

HNWIs and Ultra-HNWIs have long been active in charitable giving, and HNWI allocations to philanthropic activities increased in all regions except North America in 2009. However, the increase followed a year in which philanthropy fell sharply, and the financial crisis has clearly reduced the outright level of donations.

While North Americans still have a strong culture of philanthropic giving, and donate more than \$200 billion a year to charities around the globe[71], a smaller share of their assets was allocated to philanthropy in 2009 than in 2008. Among HNWIs in Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East, the philanthropic share of asset allocations was slightly larger in 2009 than 2008[72]. Since the crisis, donors have had fewer funds available for giving, so they are focusing on assessing the mission and effectiveness of charitable organizations to make sure their donations are really making a difference[73].

Notably, while most HNWI's and Ultra-HNWI's give primarily for altruistic reasons, feelings of social responsibility[74], social networking, and tax benefits are all reasons for philanthropic giving. Whatever the motivation, philanthropic choices are often inextricably linked to broader financial-planning initiatives, including tax strategies. As a result, the demand for philanthropic-related services offered by wealth management firms is also on the rise.

In fact, 'advice on financial planning and tax' aspects of philanthropy was the most demanded piece of philanthropic offerings in 2009 (see Figure 11). Additionally, nearly half of all Advisors said their HNW clients were asking for services related to philanthropic 'project organization and selection'.

Spotlight: Crisis Has Clearly Shifted Investor Psyche, and Wealth Management Firms are Responding

Post-crisis, most HNW clients have yet to regain their trust in the regulatory bodies and institutions that are meant to oversee markets and protect investor interests. Coupled with ongoing concerns around financial markets, this lack of confidence has long-term implications for investing behavior.

Shifts in asset allocation mirror investor caution. HNWI's are favoring predictable forms of cash flow like those in fixed-income products, and are seeking protection against downside risk, and their search for returns takes place within the broader context of portfolio risks and goals.

HNWI's have seized a more hands-on role in their finances. Above all, they want specialized and independent advice, transparency and simplicity, and effective portfolio and risk management, and are looking for wealth management provider relationships that can clearly demonstrate a more integrated approach to meeting their needs.

Emotional factors are a prominent feature of the HNWI psyche today, and wealth management firms and Advisors must incorporate those emotional factors into stronger portfolio management and risk capabilities so as to properly support client goals and needs.

With billions of assets still in motion post-crisis, wealth management firms are embracing change, leveraging key tenets of behavioral finance to rebuild investor trust and confidence and drive further innovation into their offerings and service models.

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The 14th Annual World Wealth Report 2010 [web page](#)
Capgemini Financial Services [home page](#)

US Economy Stuck in Misery

by Joel S. Hirschhorn [article link](#)

07.03.10 | Delusional Democracy | Silver Bear Cafe

The middle class is dead. The US has produced a self-sustaining two-class society. Most Lower Class Americans are in bad or uncertain economic shape but the rich and powerful Upper Class crowd keeps making and spending money as if there has been no recession.

Talk about a possible double-dip recession misses the larger reality: For many millions of Americans the first recession is still here; there has been no recovery for them. Too bad President Obama cannot comprehend that. Nice that only 23 percent of people believe that his policies have made economic conditions better. Maybe they got the change they were waiting for.

A new survey by the Pew Research Center provides disturbing data that no amount of lies from politicians can refute. Without a lot more consumer spending, remember, the US economy will not regain lasting health. The scope of the economic shock is shown by the 60 percent of Americans that have cut down on borrowing and spending. And nearly 50 percent are in worse financial shape because of the economic downturn. Forty percent of adults have tapped savings and

retirement accounts to make ends meet. Nearly 25 percent have had to borrow money from someone. Ten percent have moved back with their parents to survive the economic tsunami, and that rises to 24 percent for workers between 18 and 29 years old.

More and more Americans now recognize that retirement will have to wait. For those 62 and older and still working, 35 percent have postponed retirement. That jumps to 60 percent as a likely action for working adults between ages 50 and 61. Replace the golden years with the disappointment years, especially when inevitable reduced Social Security and Medicare benefits hit hard.

For those still lucky enough to have jobs, the Commerce Department reports that the personal savings rate in May -- the part of wage income that goes unspent -- rose to 4 percent, the highest amount in nearly a year, as anxious consumers faced continued economic woes, such as fears about losing jobs or homes, affording food and health care, and a tumbling stock market.

And always remember that the official jobless rate of just under 10 percent is pure bunk; it really is close to 20 percent nationally, and a lot worse in many places and for African-Americans and Hispanics. The average time for being without a job is now six months, with many more people jobless for a whole lot more, often several years. All this means suppressed consumer spending and continued high home foreclosure rates. No big surprise that consumer confidence crashed almost 10 points between May and June. Welcome to high anxiety.

Also keep in mind that even as the general consumer spending shows little life, the Upper Class keeps on living it up. Gallup reported "Upper-income Americans' self-reported spending rose 33% to an average of \$145 per day in May -- up from \$109 per day in April 2010 and May 2009, and the highest monthly average since November 2008." The rest of the population's self-reported spending averaged \$59 per day in May. So, rich Americans are spending nearly twice as much as the vast majority of Americans every day. Indeed, Tiffany reports sales up 17 percent in the jeweler's most recent quarter. Overall US luxury sales, says MasterCard SpendingPulse, jumped 22.7 percent in March, over the previous year. The increase in luxury buying appears to be coming almost totally from the "ultra-affluents," those households making over \$250,000 a year. Their first-quarter spending increased 22.6 percent, meaning that they have returned to spending at pre-recession levels.

And here is a gem of a new statistic. In 2009, the Economic Policy Institute reports that the typical working American with a four-year college degree took home \$1,025 per week, \$5 a week less than Americans with a four-year degree took home, after adjusting for inflation, in the year 2000. How's that for progress?

Meanwhile, almost half of U.S. companies that reduced or suspended their contributions to employee retirement plans during the recession haven't restored them.

The ultra ugly truth is that there is very little hope for the US economy providing true prosperity for the vast majority of people in the foreseeable future. Unemployment will remain high and consumer spending will remain low except for the wealthy. Economic inequality is terrible and punishing most Americans who should forget about that fabled American dream. To visualize America's staggeringly unequal distribution of wealth, suggests University of Tennessee at Martin historian David Barber, envision a 100-seat auditorium filled with 100 people. If seating in that auditorium reflected our current wealth distribution, the single richest person in the hall "would be able to spread out smartly" over nearly 43 seats. The poorest 60 would have to squeeze into just one.

As government deficits continue at historic high levels there will be even more pain as local and state governments cut employment and services. All the economic impacts of the BP oil spill in the Gulf region will continue to expand and reverberate and it is doubtful that enough money will come from BP to those in pain soon enough to prevent catastrophes for millions of people.

Some impacted people may turn to religion as if God has not already shown total disdain for humanity. Some will delude themselves that voting for certain candidates in the coming midterm elections will help. Others will bury themselves in various distractions or choose to believe the political lies of President Obama and other politicians. [How did all that

federal stimulus spending work for you?] Perhaps far more Lower Class people [Are you in denial about your Lower Class status?] should consider the advice of the deeply cynical: Kill Yourself. If only politicians would take that advice.

Happy Fourth of July. Time to try and remember the good old days.

Delusional Democracy [home page](#)

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:23 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Sunday, July 4, 2010

[We Must Preserve Our Future](#)

We Must Preserve Our Future, We Are The Stewards, The Keepers Of It !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 1-18

A “new” America exists, where supposed [monied] freedoms are subverted by those claiming to protect them; corporate-business as overriding concern necessitates an increasing concentration of wealth [globalization; warfare] engendering increasing violence and protection from the same – selfishness protected by greed and paranoia, the increasing power claimed as [proof of] [seeming] infallibility [the divine right of capital]: MAMMON AS TYRANT !! — tax-”payer”, share-”holder”, the rights and benefits of corporatism [to the exclusion of all else, including God]; the exercise of Mammon [business], the destructive growth of its false, private eco-nomy by profit-”taking” [NOT by profit-”giving”] vs. holistic, cooperative, community stewardship, sharing all increase as gift – the “cost” of Mammon is too great for us [and the planet (life-support)] to bear: WE ARE TAKING, MURDERING LIFE [the death of God(-ing)] !! – MAMMON IS ENSLAVEMENT AND MURDER [physically and spiritually]: ITS CHAIN(S) AND WEAPON OF CHOICE IS ITS MONEY [debt and force; "funding" life equated as giving life] !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 1-19

Mammon today is the Mammon of yesterday, but the “economies of scale” of today’s “giants”, the covering over mankind, the height, reach and depth, is enormous, so enormous that God is equated with/as Mammon [no difference seen between Holy and profane (not sacred; outside of the Temple; irreverent disrespect, contempt of God); the success/excess of the profane seen as sanction of God (gain as Godliness)] !! – Mammon has claimed the “provision of God” and has assumed the role of “provider” of need [commodification of life] and of desired want [mostly irresponsible lust manufactured by Mammon], this is its “power” over/upon us, it has claimed “life” in-place-of God, and holds it by force [”Mammon's life” preeminent in *all* considerations; life, even God, in service of Mammon] !! – Christ-ian-ity is the reclamation [re-claim; restoration] of God as provider, *as* LIFE GIVER [without money (commodification), without price (claim): buying and selling God (life), the "mark" of the Beast systemic] !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 1-20

The instrumentation and idols of wealth [gold, silver, etc., commodity] as “defined and accepted” by man, is *NOT* the enrichment envisioned by God: agape love gifted in an open, reciprocal commons [commonwealth], not selfish claim and commodification, our personal enrichment at the expense of another, even personal claim and (ab)use of God(-ing) as our justification !! – God’s gifts are to be received [to gift], not taken [to keep]; God freely gifts to all who will receive, without evil commodification and claim [without money, without price], and this is applied to *all* things: all that has been taken, will be taken back (forfeiture), to be freely given again [all to eat sufficiently, wearing durable clothing (Isa 23:18)] !! – as our spiritual illness is cured, our physical needs and health will follow [personal and social (community)]: pure truth and

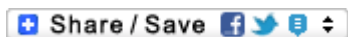
food [manna: Christ (Bread of Life)], everlasting robes of righteousness [durable: enduring much work and application] !! – our polluted and povertized nourishment [malnutrition], and our Mammonized business concept of built-in obsolescence [perpetual continuity of return (future not built-in); purposeful lack of durability and compatibility (past not built-in): our evil, selfish disregard of the past and of the future (as concern)] will be abolished, will cease to exist !! – GOD’S LOVE IS YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 1-21

We must preserve our future, we are the stewards, the keepers of it !! – when the Truth of God replaces the error in our heart and mind, then we will understand and give regard [our shame will cover us at that moment (instead of the Glory of God), we will be consumed by it: but God is Mercy as-well-as Truth], the Flame of Truth will light the Way of God !! – our Mammonized denial of brotherhood, of unselfish love, IS A DENIAL OF THE VERY BEING OF ALMIGHTY GOD HIMSELF AND OF CHRIST !! – if we are “defined” by Mammon, then we are NOT *of* Christ, we cannot serve [obey and worship; re: Elijah (Baal or God)] two “masters” [the mastery of Mammon is very apparent in this, *our* world (kosmos)] !! – when our desire [our unselfish love] for another becomes hurtful to [in the sense of liberty or emotion], or impedes, that very same person, then we must withdraw [as gift]; desire must not turn into lust [taking], it must become friendship: this applies to all persons, things, and situations, physically and spiritually !! – LOVE [as Being] *IS* GOD(-ing) !! – Love as Being and Doing *is* enhancement of the other, a reciprocal relationship, where much is given and received, but where nothing is taken !! – who and what we are must be a gift(-ing), a sharing with others, a celebration [open convivium] of life, of God: AN ENRICHMENT OF EACH OTHER !!

Mammon or Messiah Book 1 Chapter 1 [web page](#) (widescreen)

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:14 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

[Mary Sykes Wylie: Has the American Dream Become Our Nightmare?](#)

Has the American Dream Become Our Nightmare?

By Mary Sykes Wylie [article link](#)

July 3, 2010 | Psychotherapy Networker | AlterNet

For much of our history, we haven't felt any need to negotiate our national faith in unlimited upward mobility. To the great American middle class, the path forward and upward to economic comfort and security was clear, dependable, beautifully simple: you went to work every day, earned a little more money every year, saved what you could, and didn't radically overspend. In return, you were rewarded with your fair share of the most bountiful and productive society ever to exist on earth. You knew the value of money, you appreciated the value of money, and money thanked you, in its way, by allowing you to graze pretty freely throughout that fruited plain spanning the land from sea to shining sea.

True, there were always people having financial difficulties, but they were individual deviations from the norm, and most felt they could count on making more money than their parents. The default position in America was an implicit promise of perpetual abundance, as if an unwritten amendment to the Constitution guaranteed the right to several chickens in every pot and an SUV in every garage.

Within the last two or three decades, however, these relatively modest dreams of individual upward mobility exploded into grandiose and surprisingly widespread fantasies of striking it filthy rich in as short a time as possible. Getting money, always a significant leitmotif in American society, now became a major bass chord. As a people, we all seemed to go a little bats, thinking of ourselves, on the basis of no evidence whatsoever, as canny financiers or budding real estate moguls. In a way, this collective money mania harkened back to a fond, old American myth of rugged individualism, capitalist style: the plucky, clever entrepreneur pulls himself up by his own bootstraps, valiantly defeats all competitors, and ascends, unaided and alone, to the heights of wealth and prestige. "My money, myself" could almost be the unofficial motto of this generic American go-getter, particularly this generation's Wall Street buckaroos.

Whatever the outcome of this financial crisis, if it had appeared in a recipe book, it would read: mix equal parts greed, blind hope, confusion, ignorance, arrogance, abracadabra; smother the whole in a heavy sauce of lunatic optimism; bake in an overheated economy until burned through and through.

Now, as we gaze over the smoldering ruins, the classic American dream begins to resemble a collective hallucination. Of course, the current economic crisis—the worst since the Great Depression—may be no more than a rather large bump in the golden road of endlessly self-renewing American prosperity. In the past, we've met and surmounted any number of threats to our safety and security. Each time, we've emerged, breathed a sigh of relief, and settled back, complacently assured of our national birthright to be fat, rich, happy, and impervious to the afflictions dogging so many other people in the world. Still, it's hard not to have a sense of foreboding that, this time, things really are different; that the old familiar mold is broken for good.

We look around us with varying degrees of anxiety and dread. What's happened to us? What will happen to us? And yet, and yet . . . might there not also be a faint, elusive glimmer of anticipation, even of hope, behind all the gloom? The United States is undergoing a severe trial—economically, politically, socially—and we have no idea how it'll all turn out. Maybe we are seeing a made-in-the-USA version of the End of Civilization as We Know It. Or, maybe, just maybe, we'll come out on the other side a fairer, more economically responsible, more genuinely democratic society.

In the meantime, like the threat of imminent execution, our current troubles concentrate our minds wonderfully, or at least enough to consider possible alternative meanings of "wealth," besides frenetic getting and spending. So, if for no other reason than to take your mind off your nose-diving portfolio, perhaps this is a good time to revisit some of our basic assumptions about wealth—what it means to us as Americans, how it defines us as a people, how it influences the way we think about ourselves, about freedom, success, and happiness, about what we really want from life and what the American Dream really means to us.

What is money, anyway? We think we "know" money—this substance so material and yet so maddeningly abstract—but our definitions of it seem to evaporate as soon as they're articulated. It should be simple: money is just "a medium of exchange," no? But the more you think about the subject of money, the more mysterious it becomes, like something vaguely perceived in drifting fog—one shape emerging, disappearing, reemerging in another. Money has been called a universal language, perhaps a kind of pecuniary Esperanto, in which all peoples are fluent. The flow of money throughout the body politic has been compared to the physical systems of the human body: the circulation of blood, the transmission of nerve impulses, the lubrication of the joints and sinews by body fat. Money is the acknowledged bulwark of worldly power, the engine of modern civilization, a guarantee of independence, the means for doing good works. But the desire for money is a notorious trap, a form of slavery, a wicked temptation, a drug, an addiction, the root of all evil. People live for money, they kill for money, they die for money.

But why does anybody accept something clearly useless in itself—a piece of paper or, for that matter, a gold coin—and give you something "real," like food, clothes, a goat, in return? In 2008, American families lost \$11 trillion in household worth. Even billionaires had a hard time. According to Forbes magazine, 1,125 of them in 2008 were whittled down to 793 in 2009, for a collective loss of \$1.4 trillion. Where did that money go? What was it that went? Was it ever there in the first place? Ponder such questions too long and there seems to be no intrinsic reason why the whole gigantic money edifice doesn't just collapse from the weight of its own implausibility.

Cash. Open your wallet and count the bills. Notice the slight uptick of mood when you find that unexpected \$20 hiding behind the sheaf of paltry \$1s, or the pang of dismay when you realize you've gone through most of the \$100 you withdrew from the bank only the other day. Look at the \$20—the delicately incised whorls on the top and bottom edge, the august and handsome face of Andrew Jackson with his luxuriantly tousled silver hair, the pale serial washes of springlike green, peach, and blue over the bill, the faint, nearly invisible watermarks, like little hovering ghosts, the words "In God We Trust," a benediction over the whole. Rub the bills between your fingers and thumb and feel the crisp, dry, parchmentlike texture of new ones, the soft, limp, almost velvety touch of old, grubby ones—like small, ancient manuscripts in an unknown language, passed from hand to hand to hand, place to place, year to year, linking you to an endlessly receding chain of human trade and exchange.

Money can be virtually anything that people consider worth exchanging for something else—gold and silver ingots, copper blades, bronze bracelets, cowrie shells, cocoa beans, decorated belts, feather coils, animal teeth, but also alcohol, cigarettes, cannabis, candy, rice, and barley. Anthropologists have long remarked on the ritualistic, fetishistic quality of money. Even today, we feel as if money carried some talismanic power, some juju in itself. As indeed it does, for this thing so intrinsically worthless, a symbolic piece of *merde*, can get you anything you want. It's the genie that makes wishes come true, with the magical property of instant convertibility into something real and desirable—an almost metaphysical act of transubstantiation.

As if reflecting its elusively sacral quality, governments usually see to it that their currency is quite pretty in itself, each piece a little work of art. A good deal of thought obviously goes into designing and producing bills—finely engraved images of national landmarks, ancient legends, noble animals, impressive feats of construction like hydroelectric dams, historical personages, current royalty (or dictators)—often in vivid colors.

The face value of money is supposed to bear some relationship to its "real" worth, whatever that means. And yet, the assigned value, or "value," of paper money can, in dire economic circumstances, become a matter of sheer fantasy, a money mirage. Take the hyperinflated currency of poor Zimbabwe, where estimates for annual inflation in 2008 ranged all over the place, but *Asia Forbes* suggested that, at one point, it was as high as 6.5 *quindecillion novemdecillion* percent—that's 65 followed by 107 zeroes. Before the currency was revalued in February by the simple expedient of lopping 12 zeroes off its bills and issuing new ones, the notes were increasingly strange looking. One bill released last July was for a hundred trillion "Zim" dollars—\$100,000,000,000,000—an absurd line of zeroes parading across the top of the bill. These are literally astronomical figures—100 trillion is the number of stars estimated to exist in the largest galaxy ever found in the universe. Our home galaxy, the Milky Way, contains an insignificant 100 billion. But you can buy this same 100-trillion note on eBay for \$8.50, including shipping! The idea that the currency of another country can be worthless in its own country, but be worth something as a collectible sold over the Internet reinforces the dizzying sense of hyperreality in Moneyworld.

The American Dream

It's sometimes seemed that, in America, money hasn't been and isn't now the most important thing in life—it's the *only* thing. Alexis de Tocqueville, the most famous of all foreign commentators on American peculiarities (for good reason), wrote during the 1830s that the passions of most Americans "either end in the love of riches or proceed from it. . . . I know of no other country where love of money has such a grip on men's hearts or where stronger scorn is expressed for the theory of permanent equality of property. . . . The love of wealth is therefore to be traced, either as a principal or an accessory motive, at the bottom of all that the Americans do." For generations we've been told that "money doesn't buy happiness," which probably nobody in America really believes. As the many thousands of glossy celebrotainment magazines and fevered websites devoted to the doings of the rich have amply demonstrated, money can certainly buy some very lavish *facsimiles* of happiness.

Money trumps some of our most cherished assumptions. For example, we set great store by individuality—itself a kind of American folk religion. But can anybody *afford* a luxury like individual personality without adequate funds? How much of what we think of as our unique selfhood is defined by what we *earn*, what we've *bought*, what we *own*—our house and furniture, laptop and Blackberry, 42-inch plasma TV and CD player, home decor, clothes, books and magazines, car or pickup truck, fancy hiking boots, special brand of handcrafted beer? Without money to pay for what gives substance to our naked, formless being, mere earthly clay, who in the world are we? In this culture, without the money to pay for our signifiers, so to speak, our much-nurtured singularity shrinks to a meaningless distraction. We don't even notice it much ourselves—can't afford to. There are too many other pressing worries.

Whatever Jefferson meant by "the pursuit of happiness" (most likely the virtuous pursuit of both public and private well-being), it's generally been conflated with the individual pursuit of money and property. Freedom itself was in large part construed as the freedom to make money for oneself, by oneself, with as little legal impediment as possible. Democracy and equality and a relatively blank social canvas allowed people to gain enough wealth to look after their own individual needs, unrestrained by old-world customs or rules. This self-oriented worldview did have costs that couldn't be toted up on a profit-and-loss sheet. As de Tocqueville observed about the distinctive American mentality more than 150 years ago, "Such folk owe no man anything and hardly expect anything from anybody. They form the habit of thinking of themselves

in isolation and imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands. Thus, not only does democracy make men forget their ancestors, but also clouds their view of their descendants and isolates them from their contemporaries. Each man is forever thrown back on himself alone, and there is danger that he may be shut up in the solitude of his own heart."

But in American mythology, the self-made millionaire (today's billionaire) is revered partly *because* he's a loner, a solitary striver, who vaults himself (or, increasingly, *herself*) up out of the anonymous mire of the crowd. The apparent solitude of these superrich icons is part of their glamour. Even if they're known for being mean jerks and we hate them, we also love them for their single-minded ferocity, their solo triumph.

Of course, we want to be rich because we'd be able to spend as much as we want on ourselves, but we could also give as much as we want to worthy causes without sacrificing one dollar's worth of personal buying power: to indulge both our selfishness and selflessness at the same time—what heaven! But perhaps the special appeal of being not merely rich, but obscenely rich, lies beyond visions of the stuff we could acquire and the good deeds we could do. In our fantasies, the megarich appear to have achieved a kind of solipsistic nirvana of pure untrammelled individual self-will—the absolute freedom to be what they want, do what they want, when they want, where they want, and with whom, or to whom, they want. Undoubtedly, genuine billionaires would deny that the real world remotely permits such hyperbolic freedom, but dreaming our own dreams, we can easily imagine that inexhaustible wealth would allow us to fashion for ourselves whatever identity pleases us, to rise above the mundane confines of ordinary necessities and obligations that keep us stuck in our plodding routines.

The fad for "space tourism" among a small coterie of multibillionaires—American billionaire Charles Simonyi just spent \$35 million for a two-week trip to the International Space Station—seems a perfect metaphor for this dream of unqualified freedom and self-will. These spectacularly well-heeled astronauts are pulling off what no money wizard in human history has ever managed before: slipping the bonds of gravity itself and floating free of the viscid atmospheric medium that keeps ordinary mortals tethered to earth. "I call people rich when they are able to gratify their imagination," Henry James has a character say in *Portrait of a Lady*. And, indeed, money seems an open sesame to fulfilling almost any fantasy or bright idea—whether genuinely original and exalted or pedestrian and cheaply grandiose, it hardly matters.

Nobody was more attuned to the magic, charismatic quality money bestowed on people than F. Scott Fitzgerald. Think of the famous passage from *The Great Gatsby*, about the feckless and irresistible Daisy, whose allure rests on the indivisible fusion of personal charm and great wealth. Nick, the narrator, struggles to fathom what it is that makes Daisy's "indiscreet" voice—a voice that earlier in the novel he's called "low and thrilling"—so attractive. Gatsby, who's in love with her, replies brusquely, "O Her voice is full of money." And Nick understands instantly. "That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it. . . . High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl. . . ."

An exchange between Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway is as famous as the *Gatsby* passage above (and why are these quoted so often, if they don't strike some chord in the American psyche?). The former said, "The rich are very different from us," to which the latter responded, "Yes, they have more money." Years ago, literary critic Lionel Trilling pointed out in *The Liberal Imagination* that most people understand Hemingway's words as a suitable democratic jab at Fitzgerald's unseemly infatuation with wealth. "But, the truth is that after a certain point, quantity of money does indeed change into quality of personality," Trilling writes. "In an important sense the very rich are different from us. So are the very powerful, the very gifted, the very poor."

Wish and Grow Rich

Yet, according to long-standing popular mythology and with no regard whatsoever to historical or contemporary reality, Hemingway was right after all. The rich are not really so much different from the rest of us, we tend to think in democratic America: the reason they're rich is that they just have a better attitude and more gumption than we non-rich slugs. In spite of studies showing that there's *more* economic inequality and less upward mobility in the United States than in Europe, and in the face of an economic slide of historic proportions, Americans—particularly poor Americans—generally don't dislike the beneficiaries of economic inequality (unlike Europeans, who do). Traditionally, the reason has been straightforward: why would you resent rich people if you expected to be one some day?

The idea that any clever, determined, hard-working, ambitious go-getter can get rich is a familiar staple in our folk ideology. But during the late 19th century, huge concentrations of wealth and power increasingly put the kibosh on the idea that ordinary working people could make it rich, no matter how hard they struggled. They often couldn't even form unions for better pay and fewer working hours, much less get rich by raising themselves up by their own bootstraps. So, another version of the anybody-can-get-rich myth was born: it wasn't what you *did* or how hard you worked that made you rich, it was what you *thought* and *believed*.

The American "mind-cure" or "new thought" movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries (that morphed into the New Age and self-help industries later on) built a phenomenally successful market around the proposition that God, or Jesus, or World Spirit, or Universal Mind, or the Great All, *wanted* you to have whatever you desire, particularly success and money (which amount to the same thing). Of course, as the mind-cure gurus constantly exhorted their flocks: you have to do your part to help the universe along—that is, concentrate with dogged, single-minded focus on the object of your wish and believe with unflagging confidence and relentless optimism that you *will* get it.

Among thousands of books with this numbingly repetitious message, some a hundred or more years old and still being published, are *Think and Grow Rich*, *The Science of Getting Rich*, *The Magic of Believing*, *The Miracle of Right Thinking*, *In Tune with the Infinite*, *Prosperity God's Way*, and two all-time breadwinners, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie, and *The Power of Positive Thinking*, by Norman Vincent Peale, a liberal Presbyterian minister. Peale's *Power of Positive Thinking*, which has sold five million copies since its 1952 printing and is still popular, is a classic of the genre. To achieve success, Peale writes, "Formulate and stamp indelibly on your mind a mental picture of yourself as succeeding. Hold this picture tenaciously. Never permit it to fade. Your mind will seek to develop this picture. Never think of yourself as failing; never doubt the reality of the mental image. That is most dangerous, for the mind always tries to complete what it pictures. So always picture 'success,' no matter how badly things seem to be going at the moment."

The current biggest New-Age get-rich-by-wishing version of this rigmarole is *The Secret*, a book/film/website (and mainly gigantic marketing opportunity) dreamed up by Rhonda Byrne, an Australian television producer. The "secret" is the old idea that "like attracts like" (long a staple of the mind-cure movement), and that if you want good things to come to you, including money, you must put out good feelings, positive visualizations, and the right kind of energy to draw them in. "Ask, believe, receive" is the mantra. "You are a magnet attracting to you all things [including money], via the signal you are emitting through your thoughts and feelings." In other words, thoughts are things, so a thought about money is actually just another kind of specie (try paying your mortgage with it).

Much of this is nuts, of course. But how much crazier is it than what Americans have been doing recently—flinging our money away from us as if we were afraid of it? Currently, U.S. personal debt—credit cards, mortgages, car loans, etc.—amounts to more than \$13 trillion dollars, about the same amount as the country's entire GDP. For years, many of us have gone through money like a blowtorch through snow, and regarded plastic as our personal little get-away-free card, as if scribbling our names on the credit card were actually signing away debt, not signing up for it. It's as if we all thought that by acting and buying like rich people, we somehow *were* rich people—by the simple expedient of putting the American Dream on our visa card.

Now we're being forced (maybe "challenged" is a nicer, more therapeutic word) to rethink our long love affair with money and the fond belief that through some magic formula—real estate, derivatives, *The Secret*—we can go on piling it up forever. The awakening is a rude shock. What's happened over the last year—what's happened since last September!—isn't the way it was supposed to be, according to the principles of free market economics, a matter of almost religious zeal in America probably ever since Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776.

According to the holy canon of the true faith of the unimpeded free market, if people are allowed to individually pursue what they regard as their own enlightened self-interest, their collective behavior will result in a general state of robust, healthy economic equilibrium overall. The market is by definition "perfect." Most people will generally make rational choices about how to make and spend money, if given their druthers. Even the personal failings of individuals—greed, ignorance, dishonesty, fear, "irrational exuberance"—will cancel themselves out and the system will act "as if" every person were a perfectly rational, responsible *Homo economicus*.

Since everybody in the market is, in effect, a paragon of economic virtue and propriety, the free operations of the marketplace will be perfectly transparent, automatically and naturally providing access for all to the information people need to make prudent, well-informed decisions: buyers and sellers will have equal power and opportunity to settle on a fair, mutually-agreed-upon price. Self-interest will lead every person to act wisely, ethically, and with nice concern for the other players in the game.

This almost comically naive view of human behavior and how real human economies actually work has been the foundational dogma of academic economics and a linchpin of capitalist ideology for much of the past century. Given today's ongoing financial train wreck, it now seems amazing that so many big economic brains held beliefs that are such an assault on ordinary common sense. Many of these experts are now walking around shell-shocked.

You almost had to feel sorry for Alan Greenspan, Federal Reserve chair and official White House financial oracle for the last 20 years—our own Yoda—as he sat almost quivering in the hot seat of Congressional hearings, admitting that he was as dumbfounded by the "tsunami" smashing the beatific free market vision as anybody else. He admitted that there was a "flaw" in his beloved model. He felt "shocked disbelief" that the "self-interest" of the people running banks and investment firms didn't automatically lead them to be wise, honest, and protective of their clients' interests. He seemed startled that the incredibly complex mathematical risk-management formulas that were supposed to remove any trace of disorder from the perfect economy had failed so miserably: economics was supposed to be as predictable in action as Newtonian laws of physics. Then Greenspan, the guy who never saw a government regulation of the market he liked, called for more government regulation of the market!

A Different Kind of Vision

It seems clear that the current economic debacle didn't occur as a result of too much rationality in the market or because people making financial decisions—from housekeepers and store clerks taking out massive loans they couldn't afford to Wall Street colossi taking out massive loans they couldn't afford—were acting in the wise and thoughtful fashion you'd expect from *Homo economicus*. In fact, they were acting just the way anyone who's ever taken a Psych 101 course was taught—with the same mix of emotion, impulsiveness, sometimes solid, sometimes flaky reasoning, and normal craziness that lies behind pretty much everything we do.

And at last, today there are some genuine, card-carrying economists who've actually recognized these truths. A group of psychologically informed *behavioral economists* are getting their place in the sun now (after being long ignored) for doing what orthodox, mathematically minded economists never did: conduct empirical research on how flesh-and-blood humans make economic decisions in the real world. Their most famous proponent is Daniel Kahneman, a psychologist who won the 2002 Nobel Prize in economics for pioneering just this kind of work. Kahneman himself devised a variety of novel experiments revealing the many ways people are inclined to make decisions on the basis of fast, spontaneous, intuitive, uncontrolled reactions and subjective experience, rather than on objective facts and slow, strenuous deliberation. What he and other behavioral economists have discovered, incredible as it seems, is that people are often irrational, emotional, unable to discern their own genuine self-interest, prone to major cognitive distortions, bias, and overconfidence, and dependably driven by blind herd instinct to make bad situations worse. Imagine that!

Kahneman and others are now making a huge public splash because of their insights, apparently deeply shocking to the economic establishment, that *Homo economicus*—the person who decides how to spend, save, invest, and constantly thinks about getting richer—is the very same as *Homo affectus*—the person usually awash in emotions (you know: love, fear, grief, greed, envy, anger, desire, need to be accepted, etc.) In short, these researchers are bringing back home to economics the whole psychological panoply of thought, feeling, and even ethics loosely referred to by Adam Smith in his first book as the "moral sentiments."

Why is this important? Combining the insights of psychology about how and in what ways we act irrationally and about the unconscious, emotional subtext of many apparently "rational" decisions with the hard, numerical realities of economics could have a profoundly positive impact on our society. Recently *Time* magazine ran the long piece "How Obama Is Using the Science of Change," describing some of the ways the new administration will bring behavioral techniques to public policy. The idea is to apply psychological knowledge of human quirks—inertia, shortsightedness, bias, herd mentality, and

procrastination—to principles and regulations involving healthcare plans, retirement savings, energy, finance, home mortgage loans, and the like to encourage people to make better, more genuinely rational decisions. The goal isn't Orwellian manipulation, but gentle pushes in the right direction (a key book informing this movement is *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, by behavioral economist Richard Thaler and law professor Cass Sunstein, who happens to be the "regulatory czar" nominee in the Obama administration).

This discovery of psychology by at least some economists probably makes many therapists roll their eyes and shake their heads. "Are these guys only just figuring all this out now?" the question begs to be asked. These truths—that people are intrinsically emotional and not robotic, that we all want and need personal and social connection, and that what constitutes a genuinely human vision of the good life often doesn't coincide with quantifiable profit and loss calculations—are the standard working assumptions of every therapist who's ever practiced. So, finally, in the 21st century, at least some of the geniuses and money deities who presided over the current debacle actually seem to be listening to these strange, new ideas—and those who aren't seem to be keeping quiet about it.

Renewing the Commons

It seems particularly relevant these days that the word *economics* derives from the ancient Greek term meaning the management of the household or the family, and it still carries something of this meaning, though the "family" may refer to a school, a corporation, a public institution, a community, even a whole nation. An "economy" in this sense is very much a social organism, a way of life shared by millions of people, which depends as much on public and collective resources as on individual enterprise. In fact, there couldn't be any individual enterprise were it not for the public foundation—legal, educational, military, and monetary systems, regulatory agencies, social safety nets, police, firefighters—that allow it to thrive. Without this public network, we'd probably still be living in isolated little tribes bartering with the members of other tribes—when we weren't killing them and being killed in turn. Ask Iraqis or Afghanis how much individual "freedom" or opportunities for individual entrepreneurship they have without public services, an effective police force, or government accountability.

This isn't to cast too many aspersions on rugged individualism—in this culture, at least, we all feel our own sense of individual selfhood as the foundational rock of our identity. And, as Americans, we probably have in our collective DNA the stubborn belief that we have an inalienable *right* to do and be whatever we want. But, paradoxically, free market fundamentalism and the cult of the completely rational *Homo economicus* have become increasingly irrational, as well as antisocial. It's becoming clear that the success of the market, the growth of GDP, absent anything else, may be economically "good" in a narrow way, but bad overall for the society.

Selling more cars produces more pollution and hastens global warming; a huge market in junk food makes more people diabetic and obese, which requires them to purchase more health care. Overspending, overbuilding, and overconsuming are driving our society and our environment off a cliff, but don't yield the intended satisfactions. Research indicates that, after a certain modest level, and factoring in momentary pleasure, novelty, and keeping up with the Joneses, these activities actually don't make us any happier personally.

According to the American Psychological Association's annual Stress in America survey last October, 83 percent of women and 78 percent of men report being stressed about money. Nearly half of all Americans surveyed indicated they're worried about their ability to provide for their family's basic needs. Calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline increased from 39,465 in January 2008 to 50,158 in January 2009; economic stress played a significant role in the rise. On April 9, a *New York Times* story suggested that people were increasingly seeking therapy and getting or upping their prescriptions for psychotropic medications to cope with anxiety, panic attacks, sleeplessness, depression, irritability, eating poorly or overeating, and various psychosomatic complaints.

Clearly, "the economy" is making an appearance in therapists' offices big-time, even if in the negative form of clients who are cutting back on therapy because they can't pay for it anymore. But besides the usual things that therapists say and do to help clients get through any difficult life circumstance, what can they offer that seems germane to this particular national crisis? There's obviously no easy answer to that question. Therapists can't call a client's bank to stop foreclosure proceedings, or plead with a client's boss not to lay her off, or pony up to help a client pay down the thousands on his credit

card bill. However, therapists can be aware of potentially life-changing and culture-altering shifts that might occur in our society as a result of the current convulsions. Possibly, they can help clients think more deeply about what they want from life, why they make *lifestyle*, as opposed to life, choices, and what a different, less consumer-oriented way of living might be.

It could be that the time is ripe for us to rethink some of our fondest assumptions about the economy as a whole, our personal family economies, and our own nature as economic animals. We may want to begin thinking about how we can strengthen what's been called the "commons"—an old but strangely foreign concept in modern America—that refers to what we inherit or create together that contributes to the good of us all as members of a human community. (There's even, of course, a website about the "commons" movement: www.onthecommons.org.) In a society so besotted with market economics, we forget that much genuine wealth is natural and social in nature, and can't be computed entirely according to strict quantitative metrics of supply and demand, profit and loss.

What belongs to the commons, for example, includes wilderness areas held in public trust, but also our social right to unpolluted air, water, and soil. The idea encompasses both volunteer and entrepreneurial efforts that support local communities and enrich small-scale public and private life—like shared city gardens and open spaces, neighborhood businesses (as opposed to the Walmartification of America), daycare coops, family farms and farmers' markets, even cyberspace (Wikipedia, for example, the all-volunteer, peer-reviewed, socially constructed, and phenomenally successful online encyclopedia). The part of humanity that would respond to the commons isn't a "sappy self-sacrificing altruist that marketophiles posit as the only alternative to their model of human behavior," says commons spokesman Jonathan Rowe. "Nor is it the grim utilitarian socialist. Rather, it's whatever resides in us that wants to be engaged with and around other people—whether to accomplish a task or just because it's fun."

Meanwhile, it's doubtful that we'll see the end of the free enterprise system anytime soon, present tribulations notwithstanding. This isn't necessarily a bad thing: what capitalism does well—bolster independence and creativity, generate enormous productive energy, and make lots of great stuff—it does superlatively well, and besides, what else is there? What Winston Churchill once said about democracy applies about as well to capitalism: "It's the worst system in the world, except for all the others." Even dedicated "commoners," as they like to be called, aren't predicting the end of capitalism—they'd just like to see a more humanely balanced political economy, a greater realization that "public" and "social" and "collective" aren't dirty words.

No matter how successful or rich, how driven or ambitious, how dynamic, inner-directed, adventurous, or just plain pushy any of us is, none of us can ever claim to be "self-made." Like it or not, we're embedded in a vast skein of individual human lives and public institutions, our path determined as much by culture, timing, birth order, social class, and sheer luck as by our own personal gifts. As the 19th-century political scientist Francis Lieber said, "Self-made men, indeed! Why don't you tell me of the self-laid egg?"

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Looking Beyond Money, Living Beyond Fear [MMr article link](#)
by Tamara Brennan [article link](#)
Published on Friday, April 9, 2010 by CommonDreams.org

What is MONEY? [MMr article link](#)

Community Currency: Berkshares [MMr article link](#)

We Provide For Each Other In Community

MM Book 2 Chapter 8-11

Man's carnal religion [business, the ersatz religion], is artfully [as craft] contrived, and imposed by politics [of a citizen(ry)] in all of its variants [the political economy (the early name for economics); politico-economics vs. Christianity]; politics being the science and art of political government – ** the Body Politic vs. the Body of Christ !! ** — [eco-, house, settlement, habitat; eco-logy (eco + logia), the *relations* between living organisms and their environment; ECO-LOGIA, PATHS TO DWELL IN; THE LOGOS OF GOD, THE WORD OF GOD = CHRIST; CHRISTIANS = LOGIA n. pl., sing. LOGION (Gr. pl., sayings, logos, a word); THE LOGIA (WORDS) OF GOD, GOD MADE MANIFEST]; ECOLOGY = CREATION (eco-system)/CHRISTIANITY — economy [eco + nomy (-nomy; to distribute, govern, arrange; the systematized knowledge of, or the system of laws governing); management of a household, state, resources; the body corporate] – religio-economics [of or having to do with the management of the Household of God] = LOGIO-NOMICS [management by the Word of God; the kingdom of God, the *relationship* (government) of God] — God is LIFE, yet to most of us “money” is embedded in our minds *as* life, equated with our very “being,” our ability to live — ** MONEY BECOMES GOD ** – money enables, underpins life, our lives; imposed *fear* [real and imagined] of one's own survival or status; the promise or threat of money (MAMMON) – MONEY REPLACES OUR GIFT, OUR GIFTING TO EACH OTHER !! – each of us enables the other to live; ** our relationship(s) *are* life **; we provide for each other in community; LIFE IS FELLOWSHIP; EACH FREELY GIVES AND FREELY RECEIVES AS NEEDED; ** A SOCIETY OF THE GIFT, GIFTING GOD ** !! — ** MONEY IS THE REPLACEMENT OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS; MONEY REPLACES GOD ** !!

MM Book 2 Chapter 8-12

The community of God is the ** relationship of God, of His family ** — our needs and wants, our management of ourselves and our resources, our labor providing for each other, is all held within the context of the “gift” – we all partake equally of the COMMON-WEALTH by our COMMON-MINISTRATION of the gifted-wealth provided by God – WE *ARE* EACH OTHER; WE CREATE EACH OTHER !! – OUR NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL ABILITIES ARE GIFTS TO BE GIFTED IN A RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP, IN LOVE !! – THIS IS WHAT GOD IS, AND WHAT WE MUST BE IN THIS WORLD !! – ** THE GOD RELATIONSHIP MUST BE EXTENDED TO ALL OF HUMANITY ** !! — business is the “wasting” of the majority of mankind and of our common home, while the few are enclosed in their own fat [Psm 17:10] [consumption is laying waste (our) humanity and environment; money is *not* life, money is disease, a wasting consumption; money is eventual death] !! – money is held as able to possess all; all is available to money; anything can be bought for those with “the” money [ownership as right, privilege]; all of life can be equated in terms of money, NOTHING IS EXEMPT, NOT EVEN GOD; MONEY IS ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY, MONEY AS GOD, and those with “the” money are regarded as gods !! — God's community must provide God's nourishment, physically and spiritually; WE MUST PROVIDE GOD'S LIFE, ** WE MUST DESTROY THE FALSE ALTARS ** !!

Mammon or Messiah Book 2 Chapter 8 [web page](#) (widescreen)

Mammon or Messiah Book 2 [blog home](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:21 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Saturday, July 3, 2010

Gary Laderman: Hate the Sinner, Love the Gun In American Culture

"Do no harm, cause no loss" is the responsibility of an armed citizenry, the "common law of the land" where we knowingly act as the surety of-and-for our family-community(-ies). [Mammon or Messiah research]

Christ's very Apostles were armed as the following comment articulates:

Comment from SurvivalBlog

Suburban 10:

I can appreciate the plan that you outlined here. You are among the 10% that are doing something. You have a great approach. However, I say this with the greatest respect, Learn about firearms. As you will recall, when Jesus was in the garden before they took him. Peter attacked the Roman guard and cut off his ear. Jesus healed him. He didn't tell Peter to disarm. And Jesus knew Peter was armed. Why do you think this event played out like that? **Because Evil needs to be resisted. With Prayer yes, but with action too. Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple. He didn't pray them out. I respectfully suggest you and your family learn about firearms. They are the sword of our times.** Doesn't mean you have to use them. If you have one and know how to use it, you have a choice. If you don't have one or don't know how to use one, you will have no choice. Just my opinion, but the world is a better place with you and your family in it. - Brad S. [bold text emphasis added by MMr]

It is so very important that we understand this vital issue from all perspectives: [MMr]

Hate the Sinner, Love the Gun In American culture, the gun is the religious object par excellence—as American as baseball and apple pie.

By Gary Laderman [article link](#)

Essay April 17, 2008 | Religion Dispatches July 2010

It should come as no surprise that the Supreme Court once again [ruled in favor](#) of the religious culture of the gun, finding as it did on Monday that Chicago's strict handgun prohibition was unconstitutional. To help understand why gun rights continue to exert such a pull on the American imagination we resurrect the following, written by RD's Director Gary Laderman. -- ed.

The sacred status of the gun is reaffirmed in this ruling unconstitutional rights and ensures its religious security in the hearts and homes of Americans across the land. In the [words of LaPierre](#), "I consider this the opening salvo in a step-by-step process of providing relief for law-abiding Americans everywhere that have been deprived of this freedom." The sacred formula: "guns=security=freedom" continues to be one of the primary moral codes of our nation, and violence and the threat of violence will remain a righteous tradition for future generations.

Arguments about social policy and Constitutional rights, however, miss an essential point about the religious stakes in the decision: guns are sacred to many Americans, and like other powerful religious objects they can either be a supreme source of comfort or they can lead, just as often, to dangerous behavior.

In American culture, the gun is the religious object par excellence—as American as baseball and apple pie, but cherished in ways that signal the deepest religious commitments and attachments. This sacrality is not due to any association with a divinity or Holy Scripture, but to a different set of reasons tied to our imagined past, national identity, and, perhaps most poignantly, the right to be violent.

More than anything else, a gun is a source of power (ultimate power, given that it can end a life with minimal effort) that many Americans will never surrender under any circumstances. Like the Bible or the cross, or a holy relic or sacred temple, guns inspire the most fervent investments from individuals who will fight off any perceived threat from outsiders with designs on controlling and regulating these weapons; whether they're representatives of the government, the church, or the police.

Guns are ubiquitous across the American cultural landscape—a crucial element in historical memory about the past, across myriad forms of popular entertainment from Hollywood films to rap music, throughout political and civic discussions about crime and crime prevention, and safely (or not too safely) stored in homes and businesses in every corner of the nation.

With the emergence of the “cult of the colt” after Samuel Colt’s innovative design for a repeating revolver in 1836, on through the post-Civil War industrialization that led to intensified production and technological innovation in gun manufacturing to accommodate the expanding market, all the way up to the present, when AK-47s, sniper rifles, and a variety of other deadly and glamorous weapons are readily available for a violence-loving public, Americans have been fixated on the alluring power of guns.

While guns and God often go hand in hand for Americans who proclaim their constitutional right to bear arms, authority from a book is not essential to the religious rhetoric of those who presume that violence is an inevitable fact of life. Armed with this primal vision of human nature, and the concomitant moral understanding of both the role of government and the rights of individuals, these advocates for the gun see it not simply as a profane tool for protection and survival, but as a cosmic means of purification in the never-ending battle against the forces of evil lurking throughout good society.

The potential for transcendent righteous violence contained in the all-too-material plastic and steel, ammo and casings, offers sacred security as a bulwark against these ever-present social dangers—even when folks who own guns also use them for the sheer pleasures of visiting the local firing range or tracking and killing wild, defenseless animals. It is a distinctive source of treasured cultural activities, from hunting to collecting, blended with consecrated social values, like protecting the family and preserving individual freedoms.

Americans worship their guns, though no church is necessary to unify the community of believers connected by shared moral visions, ultimate values, and rejuvenating rituals. From Davy Crockett’s exploits on the frontier to Neo’s superhuman heroics in *The Matrix*; from [Halo’s](#) supernatural pull in the gaming world to John Wayne’s swagger as the cinematic embodiment of a cowboy with “true grit”, pulling the trigger or watching others pull the trigger has tremendous symbolic, and real-world, resonances. Especially in a country continually gripped by persistent fear of others: savage Indians, way back when, uncivilized blacks in the not too distant past, power-hungry government officials yesterday and today, and of course the ubiquitous threats from criminal elements in society.

The sacred aura surrounding guns is not just tied to material power or symbolic resonances; it is also spiritually infused by a peculiarly American religious text, a venerated, inviolable document at the core of national identity: the United States Constitution.

For gun lovers, the seventeen words in the Second Amendment to the Constitution is the sacred source with the authority to transform mere matter into something holy: “A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.”

But make no mistake about it; guns are lifted to the level of sacred when they are intimately linked with the promise of redemptive violence. Perhaps no other American institution embodies and articulates these sacred principles about gun ownership and the sacrality of the Second Amendment better, and more powerfully, than the revered and feared National Rifle Association, or NRA.

This culture reveres the gun as totem that ritually and mythically unites living Americans with dead Founding Fathers, past generations with future generations, and individual families with a national family; all of whom are mystically wound around the Godless-yet-sacred Second Amendment. The persistent fear that this amendment is under siege and must be defended motivates and animates the social energies (tied to more secular activities like lobbying and fundraising, but also bound up in gun worship) that drive the NRA and ensure its continued existence.

While God may or may not be invoked by NRA members and leaders, the religious messages about freedom and patriotism are easily established without recourse to elaborated and detailed theological rhetoric; like any good religious commitment, truth is self-evident, available for all to see.

Listen to the words of former NRA president Wayne LaPierre, who asserted in a recent speech that after many setbacks in the 1970s and 1980s, members of the NRA can be proud of all the accomplishments and victories the organization has seen recently in restoring the threatened integrity of the Second Amendment (including ensuring that John Kerry is not president and that Hilary Clinton will never be president).

He sermonizes: “Because you restored the Second Amendment, this freedom can be passed on to your children, and to their children and to their children’s children. The most precious of birthrights can be conferred upon every infant whose first breath is drawn beneath our American skies.” The most precious of birthrights, in this mythology, is not the right to religious freedom or equality under the law, or even to have shelter and clothing, but instead to own and shoot guns.

In a culture that has witnessed the horrors of Columbine and the senselessness of Virginia Tech, guns have the power to produce wrenching secular carnage for families and friends of the victims as well as compelling glorified martyrs for the thriving subculture that venerates the perpetrators. Guns don’t kill people, opponents of gun control assert, people kill people.

Or, to put it more biblically: Hate the sinner, love the gun.

Gary Laderman is Director of Religion Dispatches and Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Religion at Emory University. Order his most recent book, *Sacred Matters* (The New Press, May 12, 2009), [here](#). His full bio can be found [here](#).

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[Maude Barlow: "The World Has Divided into Rich and Poor as at No Time in History"](#)

"The World Has Divided into Rich and Poor as at No Time in History"

by Maude Barlow [transcript link](#)

July 02, 2010 | G20 | Democracy Now!

As world leaders gathered in Toronto for the G20 summit last week, leading activists from around the world joined thousands in Toronto’s Massey Hall to oppose the G20 agenda. Among those who spoke was Maude Barlow. She heads the Council of Canadians—Canada’s largest public advocacy organization. She’s founder of the Blue Planet Project. This is a part of what she had to say.

MAUDE BARLOW: On the eve of this G-20 gathering, let’s look at a few facts. Fact, the world has divided into rich and poor as at no time in our history. The richest 2% own more than half the household wealth in the world. The richest 10% hold 85% of total global assets and the bottom half of humanity owns less than 1% of the wealth in the world. The three richest men in the world have more money than the poorest 48 countries. Fact, while those responsible for the 2008 global financial crisis were bailed out and even rewarded by the G-20 government’s gathering here, the International Labor

Organization tells us that in 2009, 34 million people were added to the global unemployed, swelling those ranks to 239 million, the highest ever recorded. Another 200 million are at risk in precarious jobs and the World Bank tells us that at the end of 2010, another 64 million will have lost their jobs. By 2030, more than half the population of the megacities of the Global South will be slumdweller with no access to education, health care, water, or sanitation. Fact, global climate change is rapidly advancing, claiming at least 300,000 lives and \$125 billion in damages every year. Called the silent crisis, climate change is melting glaciers, eroding soil, causing freak and increasingly wild storms, displacing untold millions from rural communities to live in desperate poverty in peri-urban centers. Almost every victim lives in the Global South in communities not responsible for greenhouse gas emissions and not represented here at the summit.

The atmosphere has already warmed up a full degree in the last several decades and is on course to warm up another two degrees by 2100. Fact, half the tropical forests in the world, the lungs of our ecosystem, are gone. By 2030, at the present rate of extraction or so-called harvest, only 10% will be left standing. 90% of the big fish in the sea are gone, victim to wanton predatory fishing practice. Says a prominent scientist studying their demise, there is no blue frontier left. Half the world's wetlands, the kidneys of our ecosystem, have been destroyed in the 20th century. Species extinction is taking place at a rate 1,000 times greater than before humans existed. According to a Smithsonian scientist, we are headed toward of biodiversity deficit in which species and ecosystems will be destroyed at a rate faster than nature can replace them with new ones. Fact, we are polluting our lakes, rivers and streams to death. Every day, two million tons of sewage and industrial agricultural waste are discharged into the world's water. That's the equivalent of the entire human population of 6.8 billion people. The amount of waste water produced annually is about six times more water than exists in all the rivers of the world. We are mining our ground water faster than we can replenish it, sucking it to grow water guzzling chemical-fed crops in deserts or to water thirsty cities who dump an astounding 700 trillion liters of land-based water into oceans every year as waste.

The global mining industry sucks up another 800 trillion liters which it also leaves behind as poison and fully one-third of global water withdrawals are now used to produce biofuels, enough water to feed the world. Nearly three billion people on our planet do not have running water within a kilometer of their home and every eight seconds, somewhere in our world, a child is dying of waterborne disease. The global water crisis is getting steadily worse with reports of countries from India to Pakistan to Yemen facing depletion. The World Bank says that by 2030, demand for water will outstrip supply by 40%. This may sound just like a statistic, but the suffering behind that is absolutely unspeakable. Fact, knowing there will not be enough food and water for all in the near future, wealthy countries and global investment pension and hedge funds are buying up land and water, fields and forests in the Global South, creating a new wave of invasive colonialism that will have huge geopolitical ramifications. Rich countries faced by food shortages have already bought up an area in Africa alone more than twice the size of the United Kingdom. Now I don't think I exaggerate if I say that our world has never faced a greater set of threats and issues than it does today. So what are the twenty leaders who have gathered here, some already here and the others coming in tonight, what are they going to talk about over the next two days? By the way, their summit costs \$1 million a minute. By the way, we figure it's going to be closer to \$2 billion when it's finished, and the annual budget to run the United Nations is \$1.9 billion. I assure you, they are not going to tackle the above issues in any serious way.

The declarations have already been drafted, the failures already spun. Instead, this global royalty who have more in common with one another than they do with their own citizens and they are here really to advance the issues and interest of their class are also here just to advance the status quo that serves the interest of the elite in their own countries and the business community or the B-20, the new term, a community that will get private and privileged access to advance their free market solutions to these eager leaders. The agenda is more of the bad medicine that made the world sick in the first place. Environmental deregulation, unbridled financial speculation, unlimited growth, unregulated free trade, relentless resource exploitation, tax cuts for the wealthy, cuts to Social Security and a war on working people. In other words, savage capitalism. Now let's look at our own country here and the assault that has been launched on the work of generations of Canadians toward a just society. Stephen Harper's government has cut the heart out of any group that dissents, from First Nations people, to women, to international agencies and church groups like KAIROS, Alternative, and the Canadian Council for International Cooperation.

AMY GOODMAN: Maude Barlow, one of the major speakers at the event at Massey Hall on Friday night. Three thousand people packed-in to the Toronto event. This was at the same time the G8 and then the G20 met. Between 900 and 1,000 people are believed to have been arrested, the largest mass arrest in Canadian history. Among them, many journalists. More than a billion dollars, it's believed, were spent on so-called security, the most expensive security event in Canadian history.

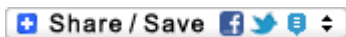
[Maude Barlow](#), head of the Council of Canadians, Canada's largest public advocacy organization, and a founder of the Blue Planet Project.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:19 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Kevin Zeese: Declare Your Independence!

Declare Your Independence!

Independent Media, Independent Political Movements, Independent Electoral Activity

Work for the Real Change we Need

by Kevin Zeese [article link](#)

July 3, 2010 | Global Research

If I had to pick one word for Americans who want real change, it would be independence.

Not only because the United States was founded on the idea of independence but because those of us who work to try and change the country for the better and have studied American history have learned this has always been the critical ingredient for real change.

First, we need independent media. Web based outlets like this one are a critical ingredient to the success of advocacy efforts. Like so many businesses in the United States, the media is controlled by concentrated group of corporations. A handful of companies own all the hundreds of television stations on your cable TV. The same is true of radio stations. More and more newspapers are part of syndicates. These conglomerates has resulted in homogenized that only reports a concentrated corporate perspective.

The media does not report on the incredible activism taking place all around the country. They don't want America to have another Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Ralph Nader and so many others who in the past helped to move the United States in part because the media reported on their activities. Now we only hear about corporate CEO's and elected officials elected due to corporate donations – otherwise it is sports stars and entertainment. The truth is there is more activism and organizing going on than even those of us working for change realize. If you attended the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit this month you could see it – at least 12,000 people attended, almost all were parts of organizations representing many more people, each working on a range of issues from housing and banking, to peace and criminal justice – people working to transform the American economy and political system. Did the media report on this conference? Does the media report on the movements these people are part of?

This leads me to the second area of independence we need – independent political movements. Throughout history it has been independent movements that made paradigm shifting change happen. Woodrow Wilson worked to prevent women from getting the right to vote. Leading suffragists were jailed and tortured during his presidency for protesting outside the White House. But in the end, woman got the right to vote while he was president. LBJ was a member of a political party dominated by southern segregationists. They opposed African American voting, ending Jim Crow, blacks and whites living together, going to school together, eating in the same restaurants – but LBJ signed the Civil Rights Act because an organized, independent civil rights movement demanded it. Richard Nixon, a war hawk did not want to end the Vietnam

War admitting defeat of the U.S. military. He was forced to by a persistent and independent anti-war movement that criticized both political parties for their support of the war. The peace movement – and the people in Vietnam resisting U.S. aggression – forced Nixon to end the war.

The Obama era has shown many Americans that advocacy groups that work hand in glove with the Democratic Party sell out their base and claim false victories. A prime example is the health care bill. This “reform” protected the status quo – health care dominated by private insurance was the problem before reform and remains the problem. The bill will result in hundreds of billions of dollars going to the insurance industry every year in tax payer subsidies and Americans being forced to buy their flawed corporate products. The cost of health insurance was not controlled, tens of millions will be left without insurance ten years from now and every regulation of the insurance industry in the law contains a poison pill that protects the insurance industry. The coalition, Health Care for America Now, spent tens of millions of dollars, donated by donors allied with the Democratic Party, to support the Democratic leadership bill. It was a sell out of their constituents who needed real reform. Americans will not receive better health care, health care will devour more and more of the GDP, and deficit spending by government will continue because of a fraudulent “reform” that preserved market dominated health care. This is happening on issue after issue – corporations win, the people lose, and organizations supposedly working for the peoples necessities claim victory while selling Americans out.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Americans need to declare their independence from two parties dominated by concentrated corporate power. Both parties take tens of millions from big business interests every year, elected officials, their staff members and sometimes their spouses profit going to work for corporations they “regulate” in the revolving door between government and concentrated corporate interests, receiving big checks for serving on their boards and feeding off the trough of crony capitalism.

This is not a new problem for America. Big business interests have always dominated government and the two parties have consistently represented status quo business interests, but throughout our history we have seen the people transform the government by creating independent political movements that challenged the two parties.

When the most valuable industry in the United States was slavery, the two parties – the Democrats and the Whigs – conspired to ensure that abolition of slavery would not be considered in Congress. The Democrats, dominated by slave holding plantation owners, and the Whigs, dominated by Northern industrialists who profited from cheap cotton, did not want to see slavery end. More than a hundred years of abolition advocacy was unsuccessful in breaking the grip of two parties whose political power came from slavery. Some of those who opposed slavery decided to challenge the two status quo parties. They formed abolition parties and ran to end slavery. They were called spoilers – just as Ralph Nader is called a spoiler for challenging the corporate parties today – but they ran and ran. They never won. But gradually the Whig Party weakened. Finally, the abolitionists evolved into the Republican Party and the most successful third party president in history, Abraham Lincoln, was elected president and slavery finally ended.

Looking back at this history would you have voted for either one of the slave parties? Or, would you have voted to end slavery even though your candidate had no chance of winning?

Look at many of the major paradigm shifts in history – farmers fighting banks that were foreclosing on them, workers not allowed to unionize and forced to work long, unsafe hours, the creation of Social Security, health care for the poor, ending child labor – the list goes on and on. All of these major changes in American history were first brought into the electoral arena by independent electoral efforts.

The government is dysfunctional today. It is unable to deal with pressing problems facing the country. People are losing their homes, declaring bankruptcy, dying from lack of health care, suffering from endless wars – but elected officials are stuck in inaction or fake action that protects the status quo. Independent politics means recognizing we have two corporate dominated parties and that we need to have at least one party not dominated by concentrated corporate interests in order to make progress on the urgent necessities of the American people. Independent politics does not necessarily mean winning elections, at least not right away. It may mean that the greater evil gets elected – an evil that will fund war and dole out taxpayer dollars to corporate interests – much like the lesser evil will do. But the path to paradigm shifting change has

always included people willing to fight in the electoral arena even if they lost the election. These parties lost the election, but won the argument and in the end won real reform.

It is becoming more and more evident to Americans that the issue of the day is concentrated corporate power. We are in the midst of a major paradigm shift that will end corporatism – the combination of government and concentrated corporations working for their interest and not ours. Will you continue to vote for one of the corporatist parties? Or, will you do as our ancestors did and create the paradigm shift we need by challenging the powers that be.

So, on Independence Day remember the roots of the United States declaring independence from the most power imperial power of the day, remember Americans throughout history challenging two parties that protected the status quo and look at the lessons of the last year when the lack of independence has only led to change that corporations can believe in.

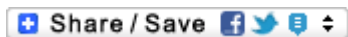
This weekend – Declare Your Independence – and work for the real change we need.

Kevin Zeese is Executive Director of VotersForPeace.US and ProsperityAgenda.US

Kevin Zeese is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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Friday, July 2, 2010

Howard Zinn: Put Away the Flags

Put Away the Flags

Remembering Howard Zinn on July 4th

by Howard Zinn [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 2, 2010 | The Progressive | CommonDreams

On this July 4, we would do well to renounce nationalism and all its symbols: its flags, its pledges of allegiance, its anthems, its insistence in song that God must single out America to be blessed.

Is not nationalism -- that devotion to a flag, an anthem, a boundary so fierce it engenders mass murder -- one of the great evils of our time, along with racism, along with religious hatred?

These ways of thinking -- cultivated, nurtured, indoctrinated from childhood on -- have been useful to those in power, and deadly for those out of power.

National spirit can be benign in a country that is small and lacking both in military power and a hunger for expansion (Switzerland, Norway, Costa Rica and many more). But in a nation like ours -- huge, possessing thousands of weapons of mass destruction -- what might have been harmless pride becomes an arrogant nationalism dangerous to others and to ourselves.

Our citizenry has been brought up to see our nation as different from others, an exception in the world, uniquely moral, expanding into other lands in order to bring civilization, liberty, democracy.

That self-deception started early.

When the first English settlers moved into Indian land in Massachusetts Bay and were resisted, the violence escalated into war with the Pequot Indians. The killing of Indians was seen as approved by God, the taking of land as commanded by the Bible. The Puritans cited one of the Psalms, which says: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee, the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for thy possession."

When the English set fire to a Pequot village and massacred men, women and children, the Puritan theologian Cotton Mather said: "It was supposed that no less than 600 Pequot souls were brought down to hell that day."

On the eve of the Mexican War, an American journalist declared it our "Manifest Destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence." After the invasion of Mexico began, The New York Herald announced: "We believe it is a part of our destiny to civilize that beautiful country."

It was always supposedly for benign purposes that our country went to war.

We invaded Cuba in 1898 to liberate the Cubans, and went to war in the Philippines shortly after, as President McKinley put it, "to civilize and Christianize" the Filipino people.

As our armies were committing massacres in the Philippines (at least 600,000 Filipinos died in a few years of conflict), Elihu Root, our secretary of war, was saying: "The American soldier is different from all other soldiers of all other countries since the war began. He is the advance guard of liberty and justice, of law and order, and of peace and happiness."

We see in Iraq that our soldiers are not different. They have, perhaps against their better nature, killed thousands of Iraq civilians. And some soldiers have shown themselves capable of brutality, of torture.

Yet they are victims, too, of our government's lies.

How many times have we heard President Bush tell the troops that if they die, if they return without arms or legs, or blinded, it is for "liberty," for "democracy"?

One of the effects of nationalist thinking is a loss of a sense of proportion. The killing of 2,300 people at Pearl Harbor becomes the justification for killing 240,000 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The killing of 3,000 people on Sept. 11 becomes the justification for killing tens of thousands of people in Afghanistan and Iraq.

And nationalism is given a special virulence when it is said to be blessed by Providence. Today we have a president, invading two countries in four years, who announced on the campaign trail in 2004 that God speaks through him.

We need to refute the idea that our nation is different from, morally superior to, the other imperial powers of world history.

We need to assert our allegiance to the human race, and not to any one nation.

This piece was distributed by the Progressive Media Project in 2006.

Howard Zinn died on January 7. Please read Matthew Rothschild's "[Thank you, Howard Zinn](#)," for more about his legacy.

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Howard Zinn (1922-2010) authored many books, including "[A People's History of the United States](#)," "[Voices of a People's History](#)" (with Anthony Arnove), and "[A Power Governments Cannot Suppress](#)."

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[Nick Robins: The Ecology of Growth](#)

The Ecology of Growth

by Nick Robins [article link](#) [article link](#)

July 1, 2010 | Resurgence | CommonDreams

One of the few good things about the current financial crisis is the extent of serious soul-searching about the right way to deliver economic success. Britain has been among the worst-affected countries, losing perhaps five years of economic growth following the pricking of the credit bubble - predicted with precision by Ann Pettifor in her 2006 classic, [The Coming First World Debt Crisis](#). Unemployment has soared, public-sector deficits have ballooned and a new age of austerity beckons. Business, politicians and the media are all calling for a rapid return to growth to create jobs, repair public finances and pay for a creaking welfare state.

Yet this regrowth option lacks conviction. It's not just that finance - the vanguard sector of the last wave of growth - is still structurally challenged, or that debt-burdened consumers look unlikely to act as economic shock-troops once again. More profoundly, there is a dawning recognition that the growth model adopted by the industrialised countries over the past half-century no longer works. Our model of growth has simply become uneconomic, with more stuff not only failing to bring additional wellbeing in the so-called rich world, but also storing up impending environmental shocks, most notably peak oil and runaway climate change.

In his latest book, [A Blueprint for a Safer Planet](#), Nick Stern calmly sets out the reasons why "high-carbon growth will eventually destroy itself", as fossil fuel prices rise and the physical impacts of climate change start to bite. In spite of Copenhagen, a new economic race is under way: to deliver low-carbon growth. According to *Climate Solutions 2* (a pioneering report on low-carbon industrialisation), some 20 clean energy, energy efficiency, low-carbon agriculture and sustainable forestry sectors will need to grow by 20-24% every year for the next four decades if greenhouse-gas concentrations are to be stabilised. Only three of these sectors are currently on track.

Yet one paradoxical outcome of the current economic crisis is the degree to which key governments have recognised low-carbon growth as one of the key routes out of recession. South Korea, for example, is investing 2% of its gross domestic product (GDP) over the next five years in its 'green growth' plan, with a clear intention to gain the economic and employment benefits of these emerging sectors.

Simply painting growth green doesn't do the trick, however. We know that growth in GDP is a lousy measure of performance. It fails to distinguish between income and capital, thereby enabling both the liquidation of natural resources and the build-up of unsustainable levels of credit to be treated as growth. It fails to capture the social dimensions of economic activity, thereby enabling vast gulfs in inequality to be masked by per capita statistics. And it takes market valuation of prices as its touchstone, something that the credit crunch has taught us to be deeply wary of.

Tim Jackson's [Prosperity without Growth](#) is perhaps the most elegant exposition of a route out of this maze. The spectre of growth has haunted environmentalism since the publication of [The Limits to Growth](#) in 1972, with sustainable development emerging in the 1980s as an uneasy way of reconciling economic expansion, social justice and environmental resilience. Jackson helps break through some of the entrenched positions that have encumbered this debate, by placing his attention squarely on the ends of economic activity: expanding our capabilities for flourishing as human beings. Growth in incomes and consumption still remains an important component of such prosperity for most of the world's peoples. But Jackson questions whether growth is still "a legitimate goal for rich countries", for reasons of human happiness as much as ecological necessity.

Jackson challenges the belief of technological optimists that strong policies can effectively decouple growth from environmental impacts. Taking climate change as a case in point, he demonstrates that average global carbon intensity would need to be 130 times lower by mid-century to meet climate goals in an equitable world of steady population and economic growth - falling from around 770 grams of CO₂ per dollar of output today to just 6 grams by 2050. The apparent absurdity of this scenario should not cloud our minds to the theoretical possibility of this 'super green growth' scenario. As Paul Ekins has [argued](#), "the sacrifice of the environment to economic growth is not ineluctable".

Jackson's focus on an extended notion of prosperity means that he is at least as interested in the weakening connection between rising incomes and wellbeing as he is in environmental limits. A range of international surveys show that beyond an annual income level of US\$15,000 per head, life satisfaction barely changes between countries with quite different levels of GDP. There appears to be a clear point beyond which extra income does not deliver extra wellbeing.

In their inspirational book [The Spirit Level](#), Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett argue that "we have got close to the end of what economic growth can do for us" in terms of quality of life. Within the industrialised world, it is income inequality rather than absolute levels of GDP that explains differences in a range of health and social outcomes (such as trust, the status of women, mental health, drug use, educational attainment, murder rates, life expectancy and obesity). And inequality even constrains the time we have to ourselves: "People in more unequal societies do the equivalent of two to three months' extra work a year. A loss of the equivalent of an extra eight or twelve weeks' holiday is a high price to pay for inequality."

If growth is to be dethroned as the primary goal of policy in the rich world, what should take its place? Jackson's book is a brave attempt to develop a new ecological macro-economics, setting out a framework for scaling up investments in resource efficiency, clean technologies and ecosystem enhancement. Just as the welfare state of the 20th century - with its investments in health and education - laid the foundations for today's knowledge economy, then investing in the quality of our natural resource base will form the basis for the next wave of innovation, employment and, yes, growth.

Rich countries dedicate at least 15-20% of their GDP on investments in human capital through spending on health and education; absurdly, spending on the entire environmental foundation of our wellbeing is less than a tenth of this. The problem with current discussions of the green economy is not that the proposals are too expensive, but that they are not expensive enough as a share of economic output.

The task of confronting the human costs of growth has barely begun, however. For Wilkinson and Pickett, this means consciously focusing on reducing inequality as a way of improving wellbeing for everyone. For Jackson it also involves dismantling the culture of consumerism (for example, through controls on advertising). Perhaps the clearest strategy of all comes in the [New Economics Foundation's](#) *The Great Transition*, ably supported by its subsequent reports *Growth Isn't Possible* and *21 Hours*, its call for a 21-hour working week.

One of the great failures of the past three decades has been how the enormous improvements in labour productivity generated from new technology have been reaped by a very small part of the population, increasing inequality and stress. Cutting the amount of working time is a way of sharing these benefits, breaking the cycle of work and spend, and liberating that most non-renewable of resources, time: for family, friends and sheer enjoyment.

What is refreshing about this crop of books is the shared confidence that an economics that puts growth in its place will be more prosperous, healthier and sustainable. Some of the specific recommendations may not be especially new, but taken as a whole, a clear strategy for social and environmental transformation is starting to emerge. As T.S. Eliot wrote in *Little Gidding* in the middle of the Second World War, "we shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time".

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Nick Robins is a founding trustee of The Resurgence Trust and co-author of [Sustainable Investing: The Art of Long-Term Performance](#) (Earthscan).

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Kevin Zeese: To Fix America's Fiscal Crisis

To Fix America's Fiscal Crisis Go to those Who Profited from Deficit Spending and Look at It's Real Causes

by Kevin Zeese [article link](#)

July 2, 2010 | Huffington Post

The United States can be fiscally responsible and meet the urgent necessities of the American people by stopping corporate welfare to concentrated industries, taxing the wealthiest that profited from three decades of tax breaks and reigning in weapons and war spending. Expanding Medicare to cover all Americans will save money and improve health. And, Social Security is essential to most Americans and is a contract between the government and the people that should not be broken.

President Obama's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform seems poised to recommend cuts in Social Security and Medicare in order to reduce government debt. If the Commission fails to look to the real causes of deficit spending and raise funds from those who profited from such spending it will fail to solve America's fiscal problems and do a disservice to all Americans.

When I testified before the Commission this week, I was one of many people who emphasized that Social Security is not a cause of the fiscal problems the government faces. It brings in more money than it uses and when there are shortages in the future they can be easily fixed. On Medicare, many people pointed out that the problem was health care spending and expanding and improving Medicare would actually help solve the deficit problem.

Before considering cuts to Social Security and Medicare, the country's most important social programs that every American will rely on for their health and well being, the Commission should focus on where wealth is concentrated as well as cuts in discretionary spending that continues wealth concentration. To do so means confronting the true sources of U.S. debt: two wars on borrowed money, uncontrolled military spending, hundreds of billions in corporate welfare, tax cuts for the wealthiest and corporations as well as deregulation of banks that led to the financial collapse that destroyed vast wealth and required massive bailouts.

The vast majority of the income gains in the United States over the last three decades have gone to the richest 5% of the population with the greatest gains in the top 0.5%. This funneling of wealth to the top came as a result of policies that were explicitly designed to redistribute income upwards. In fact, during the economic expansion from 2002-2007 the top 1% captured two-thirds of income growth. Now, the top 1% has 70% of the wealth of the nation. To balance the budget, the Commission needs to go where the money is. As a result, it is far more appropriate to tax the richest that have prospered rather than the broad middle class which have suffered.

The funneling of wealth to the top has been due to tax payer subsidies, tax breaks and corporate welfare to concentrated corporate interests and tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans. This is a major source of the national debt. From 2001-2008, tax cuts for the wealthy cost the U.S. Treasury \$700 billion, all adding to the national debt. This Commission should be looking to those who have profited from government policies - policies that have been a major source of fiscal problems you are facing - as a source for bringing the federal budget under control.

Tax Incomes Over \$5 Million: There are 7,500 households in the United States with annual incomes over \$20 million. Over the last two and a half decades, this is the group that has profited from a tax system designed to favor the wealthiest. America's highest earners - the top 400 - have seen their share of income paid in federal income tax plummet from 51.2% in 1955 to 16.6% in 2007, the most recent year with top 400 statistics available. Congress should boost the top tax rate to 50% on annual incomes over \$5 million and to 70% on incomes over \$10 million. This would generate an additional \$105 billion, going a long way toward getting our fiscal house in order.

Tax Estates Over \$3.5 Million For Individuals, \$7 Million for Couples: One hundred years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt urged Congress to address the concentration of wealth by instituting a "graduated inheritance tax." The failure to retain any estate tax during 2010 will cost an estimated \$14.8 billion in revenue losses. This Commission should endorse the Responsible Estate Tax Act (S.3533) which was introduced by Sens. Bernard Sanders (I-VT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). The legislation would exempt over 99.75% of Americans from paying any estate tax whatsoever. This legislation would exempt the first \$3.5 million of wealth in an estate from federal taxation (\$7 million for couples) as a result the tax is only paid by multi-millionaires and billionaires, fewer than one in 350 estates. The tax is graduated, i.e., an estate between \$3.5 million and \$10 million would pay a 45% rate, the same as the 2009 level. The rate on the value of estates above \$10 million and below \$50 million would be 50%, and the rate on the value of estates above \$50 million would be 55%, the top rate in 2000. The bill also imposes a 10% surtax on the value of an estate above \$500 million (\$1 billion for couples). According to Forbes, there are only 403 billionaires in the United States with a collective net worth of \$1.3 trillion. As Bill Gates Sr. has written an estate tax "is a means by which wealthy people pay back the society and the commonwealth that has made their wealth possible."

Tax Financial Transactions: The Commission should look to where the money is and urge a tax on financial speculation. A modest tax on financial transactions could easily raise more than \$150 billion a year. A modest .5% tax on stock trades .02% on trades of futures and credit default swaps would have almost no impact on ordinary investors. The United Kingdom raises \$40 billion a year by just taxing stock trades. The much larger and wealthier United States would raise much more. Over 200 economists have endorsed the financial transactions tax as a means to raise money and slow short-term financial speculation which is more akin to gambling than investment in the real economy.

The Commission should also be looking at discretionary spending that is bloated, designed to enrich the wealthiest or inconsistent with current government objectives.

Cut Weapons and War Spending: More than half of the discretionary spending of the federal budget goes to weapons and war. This should not be surprising as the U.S. spends as much as the whole world combined on the military. The Commission must look to this budget if it is to restrain government spending. One challenge the Commission faces is that the DoD budget, and many of the expenditures on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, have been un-auditable. The Commission should recommend reforms that ensure that taxpayers know where weapons and war budgets go. This is a basic requirement for fiscal responsibility. In 2008, the Government Accountability Office found that 95 major weapons systems have exceeded their original budgets by a total of \$295 billion, bringing their total cost to \$1.6 trillion. Out of the annual \$700 billion DoD budget, about \$400 billion is devoted to weapons and services provided by private contractors. Making reforms to the weapons procurement system so that cost overruns are no longer acceptable would be a major source of balancing the budget. This is just one area where cuts are possible in the military budget. In addition, the United States should be constantly reviewing the closure of some of the 1,000 military bases and outposts around the world. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are projected to cost \$2 trillion - all in borrowed money. The war in Afghanistan - where it costs \$1 million to keep one soldier for a year - is costing \$7 billion per month in borrowed dollars. Wars should no longer be fought on debt.

Review and Cut Corporate Welfare: Another area where the Commission should conduct an in-depth review is corporate welfare. This is any action by local, state or federal government that gives a corporation or an entire industry a benefit not offered to others. It can be an outright subsidy, a grant, real estate, a low-interest loan or a government service. It can also be a tax break - a credit, exemption, deferral or deduction, or a tax rate lower than others pay. Corporate welfare is unfair, destroys incentive, perpetuates dependence and distorts the economy in favor of concentrated, near monopolistic, corporations. In 1998, TIME Magazine concluded that Federal Government alone gives \$125 billion a year in corporate welfare after an 18 month investigation. No one knows how much is spent on corporate welfare today, estimates range in the hundreds of billions - not counting the bailouts of Wall Street and the auto industry. Corporate welfare funnels money to the top, providing billions of dollars to the already wealthy and concentrating power in the hands of a few. As TIME concluded "One role of government is to help ensure a level playing field for people and businesses. Corporate welfare does just the opposite. It tilts the playing field in favor of the largest or the most politically influential or most aggressive businesses."

Some corporate welfare works against the goals of government. Today, one goal is break American addiction to oil. Yet, while the oil and gas industry is experiencing record profits, the Green Scissors Campaign reports the industry is set to receive at least \$33 billion in handouts from taxpayers over the next five years. These companies stand to gain at least \$23.2 billion from tax loopholes, \$3.8 billion in royalty rollbacks, \$1.6 billion in direct subsidies for research and development, and \$4.3 billion through accounting gimmicks.

Corporate welfare to the oil and gas industry is one example among many. A detailed review of corporate welfare would greatly explain the deficit spending of the federal government.

Social Security and Medicare have become even more important as a result of the economic collapse. The loss of wealth suffered by older Americans in the economic collapse has left people in their late 40s and older with almost nothing other than Social Security and Medicare. These two very popular and successful programs should not be cut, indeed, they should be expanded.

The discussion of Social Security has been filled with inaccurate information about the stability of the Social Security fund. Cutting Social Security will not reduce the deficit. Social Security has accumulated a massive surplus - \$2.5 trillion now, rising to \$4.3 trillion by 2023. This vast wealth was collected over many years from workers under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) to pay in advance for retirement. The money Americans have paid to Social Security will keep it solvent through 2043, and after that 80% funded. These funds do not belong to the government; they belong to the people who paid for it. FICA is not a tax but an involuntary retirement savings - a contract that must be respected. Merely raising the cap on income taxed for Social Security will ensure its survival and allow its growth. Indeed, in the years that follow the current baby boom generation Social Security will return to full solvency as the birth rate has dropped from the current 2.7 rate to 2.1 children per couple. Thus, Social Security will be paying benefits to fewer people.

Regarding Medicare, this Commission should recommend that Medicare be improved and expanded to cover all Americans. This will greatly reduce future deficits. Health care is a key driving cost of future budget shortfalls. If the per person cost of health care was the same in the United States as in any other wealthy country, rather than seeing deficits the United States would experience surpluses. The Commission should use its platform to urge the removal of the profit-driven health insurance industry from the equation. Improved Medicare for all will save Americans \$400 billion in annual health care expenditures and reduce government deficits.

The goal of fiscal responsibility and meeting the urgent necessities of the American people are not inconsistent. But, to meet those twin goals this Commission needs to look to who has profited from the creation of debt, where discretionary funds are being spent for increase the wealth of the wealthiest in unnecessary and counterproductive ways and tax concentrated wealth created by three decades of government policy.

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- GAO, Assessment of Selected Weapons Programs, March 2009 [pdf link](#)
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- United for a Fair Economy, Responsible Wealth [web page](#)
- TIME Magazine, Donald Bartlett, James Steele, Corporate Welfare [article link](#)
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Thursday, July 1, 2010

Gary Dorrien: Christian Socialism as Tradition and Problem

Commonwealth Economics: Christian Socialism as Tradition and Problem

by Gary Dorrien [article link](#)

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For more than a century, Christian theologians have dreamed of a transformed economic order based on democratic empowerment and the common good. A century ago the Social Gospel movement reverberated with calls for economic democracy. In the 1930s, after global capitalism crashed spectacularly, theologians stressed the necessity of finding an alternative to capitalist boom and bust. In the 1970s, the rise of liberation theology resurrected the dream of a transformed economic order.

But the dream failed, and today capitalism prevails in more global and predatory forms than ever. Today the idea of a fundamental alternative seems quaint at best, even though global capitalism has crashed again. The idea of a systemic alternative has lost its coherence in a world of megabyte monies zipping across the planet at the speed of light, de-linked from real production. There is no major movement to replace the predatory impulses of capitalism. There is only the necessity of creating one, recognized by thousands of disparate organizations and communities. For the very problems that gave rise to socialist movements still exist, still matter, and persist among new problems threatening the survival of the planet.

Almost every important theological movement of the past century called for a different future, especially liberal theology, the Social Gospel, Barthian neo-orthodoxy, Catholic social teaching, early Niebuhrian realism, ecumenical social ethics, liberation theology, progressive evangelicalism, and radical orthodoxy. The Social Gospel expounded a vision of decentralized economic democracy or, sometimes, democratic socialism. The Barthian movement was explicitly socialist, though it usually tried to keep theology and politics in different compartments. The papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) introduced the idea of a "solidarist" third way between capitalism and socialism in Catholic social teaching, which was expounded explicitly in *Quadragesimo Anno* (1941). For decades the ecumenical movement kept alive the Social

Gospel hope of a social democratic transformation of capitalism, until liberation theology helped to push the World Council of Churches further to the left on political economy. Liberation theology advocated a revolutionary Marxist or, sometimes, democratic socialist vision of liberation from structures of oppression and dependency. More recently the "Radical Orthodoxy" group associated with John Milbank has combined socialist politics with classical high-church theology. Twentieth-century theologians and social ethicists repeatedly dreamed of an economy based on human need and the common good.

In every case, the social mission of Christianity had something to do with replacing capitalist selfishness and inequality with something better. Virtually all of the Progressive-Era Social Gospelers spoke an optimistic language of progress and social evolution, even if they were radical socialists. The more radical Gospelers couched their views in third-way terms that kept their politics from sounding scary. Reform-oriented progressives such as Washington Gladden, Francis G. Peabody, Shailer Mathews, and Catholic ethicist John A. Ryan favored a third way between capitalism and socialism, advocating cooperatives and guilds, while radicals such as Walter Rauschenbusch and Harry F. Ward struggled to make Christian socialism not seem dangerous.

The Great Depression yielded a sterner kind of Christian radicalism that spurned third ways, speaking a binary language of revolution versus barbarism. There was no third way between state socialism and reaction; for Reinhold Niebuhr and his followers, economic democracy was serious only if it stood for a revolutionary state control of the economy. In the name of realism and relevance, the Niebuhrians of the 1930s and other radical socialists propounded a host of bad ideas, rejecting markets and production for profit, claiming that state planners could replicate the pricing decisions of markets, and equating socialization with nationalization.

On these issues Rauschenbusch ended up looking better than the radicals that panned him for being too idealistic. He contended that democratic worker control was the heart of the matter and that markets cannot be abolished in a free society. He had a strong concept of personal and collective evil, coupled with an overcoming message of social salvation. On the other hand, even Rauschenbusch recycled the totalizing rhetoric of state socialism, embraced the Marxist theory of surplus value, claimed that prices under socialism would be based entirely on services rendered, and trusted too much in the overcoming tide of social idealism.

To the major theologians of the Progressive Era and the Great Depression generation, the capitalist devotion to individual self-interest was plainly hostile to Christian teaching. Some who were far from being Marxists were unsparing about the predatory immorality of capitalism. Christian Socialists usually acknowledged, like Marx, that capitalism marked a great leap forward, and that capitalist accumulation and industrialization were necessary preconditions of a desirable social order. To Barthian theologian Emil Brunner, however, capitalism was not a prelude to anything except moral and social catastrophe. In *The Divine Imperative*, he pronounced that capitalism "is that system in which all that we can see to be the meaning of the economic order from the point of view of faith is being denied: in which, therefore, it is made almost impossible for the individual to realize, in any way through his economic activity, the service of God and his neighbor. This system is contrary to the spirit of service; it is debased and irresponsible; indeed we may go further and say it is irresponsibility developed into a system."

Anglican bishop William Temple pressed similar feelings about capitalism into a theory of guild socialism. In 1941, shortly before he was named Archbishop of Canterbury, Temple called for an excess-profits tax to create worker and community-controlled enterprises. The following year his book *Christianity and the Social Order* enlisted natural law against the spirit and logic of capitalism. Production naturally exists for consumption, Temple argued, but capitalism reversed the natural order of things by making consumption depend on production, while production depended on finance. Temple's alternative put a higher value on fellowship than profits, calling for withering capital investment, mutual export trade, economic democracy, a socialized monetary system, and the social use of land. He observed: "It is important to remember that the class-war was not first proclaimed as a crusade by Marx and Engels; it was first announced as a fact by Adam Smith. Nothing can securely end it except the acquisition by Labour of a share in the control of industry. Capital gets its dividends; Labour gets its wages; there is no reason why Capital should also get control and Labour have no share in it."

One of the ironies of modern theology is that the American Social Gospellers of the 1930s and 1940s are nearly always treated as naive idealists, because many of them were pacifists, while Niebuhr is treated as the hero of the story. Yet Niebuhr was wrong about the New Deal, and the Social Gospel progressives were right. The Social Gospellers supported the Emergency Banking Act of 1933, which allowed the new Reconstruction Finance Corporation to buy bank equity. Over the next year, the RFC bought more than \$1 billion of bank stock, about one-third of the capital invested in U.S. banks. The Social Gospel progressives, speaking through the Federal Council of Churches, called for "subordination of speculation and the profit motive to the creative and cooperative spirit" and "social planning and control of the credit and monetary systems for the common good." They supported mortgage restructuring, social security, public works employment, and selective nationalization, while Niebuhr replied that these were mere Band-Aids to make middle-class moralists feel better, and that the New Deal was a form of quackery.

The Social Gospellers told a story about the necessity of gradually democratizing society; Niebuhr told a more dramatic story, that history would either move forward to socialism or move backward to barbarism. There was no third way. Radical socialism, communism, and fascism were supposedly more realistic than the tame progressivism of the social democratic, Social Gospel, and New Deal movements. But the radical alternatives crashed and burned, and afterward Niebuhr retreated to welfare state reformism and the liberal Democratic mainstream.

Ecumenical social ethics in the 1950s, taking a similar tack as Niebuhr, decidedly trimmed its sails, with notable exceptions such as Walter Muelder and Martin Luther King, Jr. But in the 1960s and 1970s, socialist idealism made a comeback in social ethics and theology through the rise of German political theology, Third World liberation theology, Black theology, and feminism. German theologian Jürgen Moltmann described democratic socialism as the historical form that Christian hope had to take, "given the present poverty of capitalism and its democracies as well as socialism and its dictatorial governments." Peruvian liberationist Gustavo Gutierrez proclaimed that Christian theology needed to speak "of social revolution, not reform; of liberation, not development; of socialism, not modernization of the prevailing system." Argentine liberationist José Míguez Bonino declared that the struggle for socialist transformation "concretely defines my Christian obedience in the world."

African American social critic Cornel West positioned himself to the left of democratic socialism, embracing the neo-Marxist councilism of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Korsch, while feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether advocated "a democratic socialist society that dismantles sexist and class hierarchies, that restores ownership and management of work to the base communities of workers themselves, who then create networks of economic and political relationships."

Visions of this sort were commonplace in the theologies of the 1970s and 1980s. Many theologians explicitly advocated democratic socialism, notably Harvey Cox, Gregory Baum, Leonardo Boff, Robert McAfee Brown, Beverly W. Harrison, Kenneth Leech, Johannes Metz, Arthur McGovern, Delores Williams, Ronald Preston, Dorothee Soelle, Franklin Gamwell, Phillip Wogaman, Gibson Winter, Daniel Maguire, and Joe Holland. Nearly all of them stressed that good socialism had little or nothing to do with communism. American Social Gospeler Harry Ward and English Anglican dean Hewlett Johnson were cautionary figures in this area, having ruined their reputations by fixating on the star of Soviet Communism. At its best, Christian socialism also held out against state socialist ideology.

For decades the central policy proposal of most Western socialist parties was centralized government ownership of the major means of industrial production. "Socialism" meant top-down government planning, economic nationalization, and what the British Fabians called the rationalization of society—that every act of collectivization furthered the socialist cause of rationalized economic planning. The best versions of Christian socialism replied that exalting state power was not the answer. The Anglican socialism of Temple, Charles Raven, R. H. Tawney, and Charles Gore was rooted in the pre-Marxist Anglican cooperativism of F. D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, and John Ludlow, just as the American decentralized socialism of W.D.P. Bliss, Justin Wroe Nixon, and Walter Muelder was rooted in the economic democracy of the Social Gospel. Eminent theologian Paul Tillich shared the Christian socialist aversion to state collectivism. Warning against the "bureaucratization of the economy," he took for granted the necessity of market discipline and contended that only the market knew how to get prices right.

The debate that advocates of decentralized economic democracy always wanted was the one between themselves and state socialists; communism was a perversion of anything deserving to be called socialism. But after the Soviet Union imploded, decentralized socialists did not get the debate they wanted. The differences between the various democratic socialisms seemed irrelevant in a world seized by the manic logic of capitalism. Economic globalization pushed aside socialist concerns about equality and humane community. Nations crawling out from decades of Communist rule in the former Soviet bloc did not aspire to democratic versions of anything smacking of socialism, which raised the question whether anything was left of Christian socialism. How much of the vision of a democratized social order could be saved or reconstructed in a political culture in which "socialism" mostly conjured up repulsive images of state authoritarianism? How was it possible to reclaim the social Christian vision of democratized economic power at a time when corporate capitalism was turning the planet into a single economic market?

For some Christian ethicists, the dream of economic democracy was exhausted and refuted. Lutheran neoconservative Robert Benne challenged social ethicists to admit that their tradition had been wrong to support democratic socialism. Neo-liberal realists Max Stackhouse and Dennis McCann agreed, urging that the death of Communism bore unavoidable implications for Christian social ethics. Stackhouse and McCann observed that "the Protestant Social Gospel, early Christian realism, much neo-orthodoxy, many forms of Catholic modernism, the modern ecumenical drive for racial and social inclusiveness, and contemporary liberation theories all held that democracy, human rights, and socialism were the marks of the coming kingdom." But liberal Christianity was wrong about socialism: "The future will not bring what contemporary theology said it would and should." According to Stackhouse and McCann, the verdict of history had come down not only against the Communist mistake, but against even the forms of democratic socialism that militantly opposed communism. Socialism was dead, which marked the end of liberal Christianity's attempt to give it a human face.

For neoconservatives and some Niebuhrian realists, the project that remained for Christian social ethics was to apply the chastening lessons of Niebuhrian realism to the economic order. Neoconservative social critic Michael Novak flatly opposed breaking down concentrations of economic power. Noting that Niebuhr failed to press his political realism into a critique of social democratic economics, Novak declared that neoconservatives like him completed this essential Niebuhrian task by repudiating the progressive Christian tradition of economic democracy: "Niebuhr did not give much attention to economic issues. Precisely in Niebuhr's neglect, I found my own vocation. Surely, I thought, the next generation of Niebuhrians ought to push some of Niebuhr's deeper insights into the one major area he neglected."

Novak's assumption of this neglected task drew him deeply into the political Right, where, in the 1980s, he became a Reagan supporter and a chief mythologist of American capitalism. To apply Niebuhr's realism to the economic realm is to relinquish the progressive Christian dream of democratizing economic power, Novak argued. The values and legitimizing principles of democracy are pertinent only to the political sphere. To face up to modernity is to exclude democratic tests of legitimacy, equality, and accountability from the economic realm. Realism emphasizes wealth creation and allows the market to take care of distribution. It opposes government regulation of the financial sector and assures that wealth creation at the top will eventually trickle down to middle-class and working-class communities. It accepts and celebrates the triumph of corporate capitalism. Neoconservatism became a powerful political movement by taking that option, advocating capitalist ideology, waging culture wars, and espousing a foreign policy of American global domination.

As I argued in two books, *Reconstructing the Common Good* (1992) and *Soul in Society: The Making and Renewal of Social Christianity* (1995), however, there was something terribly strange about claiming that the death of Communism somehow discredited the vision of social and economic democracy. Democratic socialists were the original anti-communists. For seventy years nothing was more galling to them than to be lumped with their communist opponents. Consistently, militantly, and through decades of up-and-down political fortunes, social democrats warned that communism was suffocating and ultimately unsustainable.

To them it was incredible to be told, afterward, that the death of Communism somehow marked the end of their relevance. The ravages of unfettered capitalism and imperialism that produced socialist movements in the first place had not diminished with the triumph of a more corporate and globalized capitalism. To call the entire tradition of seeking an economic alternative a mistake was to resign Christian ethics to a status quo politics that preserved the privileges of the wellborn and fortunate. It was to pretend, wrongly, that concentrations of economic power could be ignored without undermining political democracy and without doing harm to the poor and vulnerable. And it was to assume, wrongly, that

the planet's ecosystem, a finite reality, could withstand another century of unlimited-growth "modernization," much less the manic logic of post-Cold War capitalist globalization.

William Temple is another figure who, like Rauschenbusch, has emerged looking better with time. A child of privilege and of British sentimental imperialism, both of which left their mark on him, he yet produced some of the most creative Christian socialist thinking of his time. Temple worried that "socialism" was already indelibly associated with Left-authoritarian politics. Communism was a factor in that judgment, as was the centralizing tendency of social democracy. He opposed state socialism while appreciating that for most people, socialism meant economic nationalization. Thus Temple eschewed the language of socialism in making his case for decentralized economic democracy. As he explained in *Christianity and the Social Order*, he hoped that all Christians would accept his arguments for economic democracy, even though few Christians outside the trade unions and the political left embraced socialism.

Temple took no interest in bolstering a suspect ideology with the prestige of Christian faith. What mattered was for religious people to be involved in the struggle for social justice in their own way. He appropriated guild socialist ideas in discerning and practicing the prophetic meaning of Christianity, but he did not reduce the social ethical meaning of the gospel to his politics. For him, socialist ideology was a barrier to the Christian ethical aim of democratizing social and economic power. Temple promoted economic democracy as a Christian ethical project while eschewing the progressive Christian tendency to sanctify socialist ideology.

The difference is crucial. Progressive Christianity has to stand for social justice, but the ideology of socialism is dubious and unitary. It smacks of one-size-fits-all dogmatism even when modified by democracy, cultural difference, and pluralism. Too much of the liberationist tradition and other radical theologies have done what Temple feared, undercutting the moral influence of progressive Christianity by clinging to socialist ideology. Progressive Christianity today needs to be more pluralistic, contextual, and pragmatic than that, standing for radical democracy and decentralized economic democracy in ways that suit particular social and cultural contexts.

The social vision of economic democracy cannot be imposed or transplanted. It can only take shape over the course of decades, as hard-won social gains and the cultivation of cooperative habits and knowledge build the groundwork for a better society. Such a project does not call for large-scale investments in any particular economic model. It does not rest upon illusions about human nature. It does not envision or require a transformed humanity. Reinhold Niebuhr's epigrammatic justification of democracy suffices for economic democracy: The human capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but the human inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

Niebuhr did not deny that the human capacity for fairness is often moved by genuine feelings of compassion and solidarity, but to him it was obvious that all such feelings are mixed in human nature with more selfish motives. The crucial point was that democracy is necessary precisely because virtually everyone is selfish. Because human beings are so easily corrupted by the attainment of power, democracy is necessary as a restraint on greed and the human proclivity to dominate others.

By the time that he elaborated this argument in *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (1944), Niebuhr was no longer inclined to press it as a case for economic democracy. Having belatedly given up Marxism, Niebuhr gave up on Christian socialism a few years later. In the early 1940s he did not explore the possibilities of a politics that democratized and decentralized economic power. For Niebuhr, there were only three serious possibilities-free market capitalism, socialism, and New Deal capitalism-and socialism meant economic nationalization and state-planned production for use. He supported the Delta Farm Cooperative movement, but there were never enough experiments of this kind for him to take them seriously as prototypes of an alternative politics. Realism compared liberal capitalism with existing historical alternatives, not a fantasized economic democracy.

That remains a plausible verdict. Whether it is the only serious verdict depends largely on the viability of decentralized, social market alternatives that Niebuhr did not seriously consider. To persist in struggling for the democratization of social and economic power is to hold out for a battered, marginalized, increasingly counter-cultural vision of the common good that is deeply rooted in the history of American progressivism and progressive Christianity, and which has chapters yet to be written.

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Gary Dorrien: The Relevance of the Social Gospel

Society as the Subject of Redemption: The Relevance of the Social Gospel

by Gary Dorrien [article link](#)

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The idea that biblical religion has a regenerative social mission is as old as the biblical message of letting justice flow like a river, pouring yourself out for the poor and vulnerable, and attending to what Jesus called the "weightier matters of the law," justice and mercy. A century ago, the Social Gospel movement put it in a novel way, calling Christians to transform the structures of society in the direction of social justice.

It was not a coincidence that the Social Gospel, sociology, social ethics, and Social Darwinism all arose at the same time, plus the ideas of social structure, social salvation, and social justice; also corporate capitalism and the trade unions. For the Social Gospel was essentially a North American version of the movements for Christian Socialism that arose in England, Germany, Switzerland, and elsewhere in the late nineteenth century. It was based on a doctrine of social salvation, which was based on the emerging sociological idea of social structure, which gave rise to the idea of social justice.

The novelty of the Social Gospel was not that it possessed a social ethic or got involved in politics, though it certainly did both. The difference was its focus on structural transformations for social justice. Early Christianity had a regenerative social ethic, but the early church was a marginalized eschatological community. The medieval church had a social ethic of the common good, but it was an ethic of authority and social control. The Reformed tradition had a covenantal social ethic with transformational potential, but it was turned into an apologetic for commercial society. The Anabaptist churches had a radical-conservative social ethic of (usually pacifist) dissent, but the Anabaptists were ascetic or apocalyptic or both. Evangelical pietism had a postmillennial social ethic that fought against slavery and alcohol, but it fixated on personal conversion.

Only with the rise of Christian Socialism and the Social Gospel did Christian communities seek to restructure society in the direction of freedom and equality. Society became the subject of redemption; social justice became intrinsic to salvation. If there was such a thing as social structure, redemption had to be reconceptualized to take account of it; salvation had to be personal and social to be saving.

The leading figures of the Social Gospel were Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch. For them, the Social Gospel was political without apology, with a progressive ideology, and vibrantly evangelical, in a theologically liberal fashion. Gladden stood in the movement's mainstream, advocating cooperative ownership and liberal internationalism, and he was never dangerous. He passionately opposed World War I right up to the moment that America intervened, whereupon he embraced the war to end all wars. Every Sunday morning he preached on personal religion, and every Sunday evening he preached about economics, militarism, and social religion. On the first Sunday of every year he preached a sermon on

how America and the world had improved over the past year. Gladden tried to be realistic about the class struggle, but he could never say, with Rauschenbusch, that idealism was too weak and sentimental to effect any great social change.

Rauschenbusch said it in the movement's greatest work, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907), a book otherwise loaded with moral idealism, declaring that a great social truth can be won only when an oppressed class "makes that truth its own and fights for it." In the book's first part, Rauschenbusch described the purpose of prophetic biblical religion as the transformation of society into a divine commonwealth of freedom, equality, democracy, and community. The second part explained why the church had never carried out this mission. The third part urged that it was not too late for the church to follow Jesus.

Rauschenbusch realized that the key to the book was the second part, but he feared that the third part would get him fired from his teaching position at Rochester Seminary. It had a blazing manifesto for democratic socialism in a closing eighty-page chapter titled, "What To Do." For his second-part analysis of what happened to Christianity, he argued that every chapter of church history could be titled, "How the Kingdom of God Was Misconstrued in This Era, or Replaced by Something Else." In his telling, prophetic religion was the "beating heart" of scripture, the prophetic spirit "rose from the dead" in Jesus and the early church, and Christianity was supposed to be a prophetic religion of the divine commonwealth.

Rauschenbusch argued that the rise of corporate capitalism marked a crisis for American civilization and an opportunity to recover the ideal of a radical democratic commonwealth. If production could be organized on a cooperative basis, if distribution could be organized by principles of justice, if workers could be treated as valuable ends and not as dispensable means to a commercial end, if parasitic wealth and predatory commerce could be abolished ... his fantasy of ifs went on for a half-page. If all these things could be accomplished, it might be possible "to live a really Christian life without retiring from the world."

Christianity and the Social Crisis went through thirteen printings in five years and had a huge impact on the ecumenical movement, which founded the Federal Council of Churches in 1908, which in turn became a vehicle for the transmission of Social Gospel ideas into the church and society. Most Social Gospel leaders opposed intervening in World War I until the United States did so, whereupon they ditched their opposition to war. After the war, appalled by the vengeance of the victors, they pledged never to do it again, which made it very difficult for them to face up to the necessity of doing so in the 1930s. Reinhold Niebuhr got to be famous by imploring his Social Gospel friends to choose the lesser evil of supporting another war, this time to prevent "the triumph of an intolerable tyranny."

The Social Gospel movement had many faults and limitations. Much of it was sentimental, moralistic, idealistic, and politically naive. Most of it preached a gospel of cultural optimism and a Jesus of middle-class idealism. It spoke the language of triumphal missionary religion, sometimes baptized the Anglo-Saxon ideology of Manifest Destiny, and usually claimed that American imperialism was not really imperialism because it had good intentions. The Social Gospel helped to build colleges and universities for African Americans, but only rarely did it summon the courage to demand justice for blacks. It supported suffrage for women, but that was the extent of its feminism. It created the ecumenical movement in the United States, but it had a strongly Protestant, anti-Catholic idea of ecumenism, and Rauschenbusch was especially harsh on this topic. The Social Gospel movement took for granted that Jews, Catholics, atheists, and all others that weren't mainline Protestants had to assimilate into mainline Protestant culture. And in the 1930s it was too traumatized by its memory of World War I to face up to the moral imperative of smashing Nazi fascism.

For decades the Social Gospel was ridiculed for many of these things, beginning with Reinhold Niebuhr's frosty proto-Marxist polemic of 1932, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. Two generations of seminarians learned about the Social Gospel by reading its Niebuhrian critics, not Rauschenbusch or Washington Gladden. Niebuhr taught, wrongly, that the Social Gospel had no doctrine of sin, and more justly, that it was too middle-class and idealistic to be a serious force in power politics. After Niebuhr's generation had passed, liberationists judged that the Social Gospel and Christian realism were too middle-class, white, male-dominated, nationalistic, and socially privileged to be agents of liberation.

Yet the Social Gospel, for all its faults, had a greater progressive religious legacy than any other North American movement. Christian realism inspired no hymns and built no lasting institutions. It was not even a movement, but rather, a reaction to the Social Gospel centered on one person, Reinhold Niebuhr. The Social Gospel, by contrast, was a half-century

movement and an enduring perspective that paved the way for modern ecumenism, social Christianity, the Civil Rights Movement, and the field of social ethics. It had a tradition in the black churches that was the wellspring of the Civil Rights Movement through the ministries of Reverdy Ransom, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Benjamin E. Mays, Mordecai Johnson, and Howard Thurman. It had anti-imperialist, socialist, and feminist advocates in addition to its liberal reformers. It created the ecumenical and social justice ministries that remain at the heart of American social Christianity. And it espoused a vision of economic democracy that is as relevant today as it was a hundred years ago.

To put it in contemporary terms, the Social Gospel was a response to the first historic wave of economic globalization, the clash between a burgeoning corporate capitalism and a rising labor movement. Social Gospel leaders urged that modernity surely had a stage beyond capitalism. If modernity was a good thing, which they did not doubt, it had to have a stage beyond capitalism.

Most social gospelers spoke a "third way" language of cooperatives and community ownership, following the lead of Gladden and Richard Ely. A more radical group, following Rauschenbusch, explicitly called economic democracy "socialist" while stressing decentralized forms of socialization. A third group advocated state socialism and state planning; it included George Herron and Vida Scudder.

In the 1930s, Reinhold Niebuhr blasted all these groups for their moralism and idealism. For radical state socialists like Niebuhr, economic democracy was serious only if it meant government control of the economy. Wrongly, radicals like Niebuhr equated decentralized forms of socialization with nationalization, rejected production for profit, claimed that state planners could replicate the pricing decisions of markets, and wanted government planners to organize an economy not linked by markets. In the 1940s, after Niebuhr gave up on all of this, he made his peace with the Democratic Party establishment and became a leading figure in it.

On these issues Rauschenbusch ended up looking better than the radicals that panned him for being too idealistic. He assumed that markets cannot be abolished in a free society and that we need to get as much as we can out of worker and community ownership. Political democracy without economic democracy is an "uncashed promissory note, a form without substance," he argued. Under capitalism, the capitalist class wrote its interests into the law; under a fully realized democracy, property laws would serve the interests of the public as a whole.

Rauschenbusch's concept of economic democracy was a patchwork of socialist and reformist themes that did not always fit together. He could be sloppy in failing to distinguish among direct workers' ownership, mixed forms of cooperative ownership, and public ownership of production. He adopted Marx's labor theory of value and asserted that prices in a just society would be based entirely on services rendered.

For all of his idealistic rhetoric and unassimilated borrowings from Marx, however, Rauschenbusch wisely urged that the mix of ownership modes in a democracy must always be a matter of contextual judgment. The blueprint dogmatism of the Marxist tradition was alien to him. He did not think of economic democracy as only one thing, either economically or politically, and he argued that culturally it would have to be at least as pluralistic as political democracy already was.

A century ago the newly founded Federal Council of Churches issued a historic pronouncement called the Social Creed of the Churches. The churches could not agree on doctrine; thus there were thirty-two denominations in the Federal Council. But the Social Gospel leaders of the Federal Council reasoned that the churches should be able to agree about social justice and do something for it. So they issued a Social Creed, advocating "equal rights and complete justice for all men," the abolition of child labor, a "living wage as a minimum in every industry," social security, an equitable distribution of income and wealth, the abatement of poverty, and eight other planks focused mostly on economic justice.

A century later the National Council of Churches, representing thirty-three denominations, has a new Social Creed that is very much in line with the creeds of 1908 and 1932; I was on the team that wrote it. It calls for "full civil, political, and economic rights for women and men of all races." It demands the "abolition of forced labor, human trafficking, and the exploitation of children." It supports "employment for all, at a family-sustaining living wage, with equal pay for comparable work." It stands up for the right of workers to organize, opposes the death penalty, calls for the abatement of hunger and poverty, and endorses universal health care, social security, and progressive tax policies. It commends

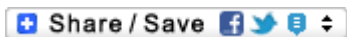
immigration policies that protect family unity and foster international cooperation. It stresses the necessity of adopting simpler lifestyles; living within our means; protecting the earth's environment; and investing in renewable energy. It supports equitable global trade that protects local economies, and advocates a foreign policy based on international law and multilateral diplomacy. It calls for nuclear disarmament, reductions in military spending, and the abolition of torture. And it calls for cooperation and dialogue among world religions.

Parts of the new Social Creed are virtually identical with the first one, reflecting elementary justice principles still unrealized. Other parts reflect the ecological, feminist, and multicultural concerns that distinguish our time from previous generations. Getting a statement like the new Social Creed through a large ecumenical organization is at least as difficult today as it was in the heyday of the Social Gospel, and the crisis of social justice organizing within religious communities today is acute. Twenty years ago every ecumenical denomination had stronger organizations dealing with peace and social justice issues than they do today. For all of us working in and through religious organizations on behalf of social justice causes, this is necessarily a time of retrenchment and rearguard battles. But it is also a time of bold faith and hope. Unlike the social gospellers, we have no illusions of being carried along by a tide of cultural progress. For us, history must be about struggle, not progress; or at least, as Frederick Douglass put it, "without struggle, there is no progress."

Rauschenbusch put it best. Stereotypes about him notwithstanding, he had a strong sense of personal and social structural evil, as his *Theology for the Social Gospel* (1917) made clear. Rauschenbusch topped off his six chapters on evil with a stunning description of the collective sum of evils that he called "the kingdom of evil." He argued that the ravages of human hatred, greed, and will to power negate any possibility of achieving a perfect democracy. Yet for all of that, he urged, we must seek to build a cooperative commonwealth. At best there is only an "approximation" of a just social order: "The kingdom of God is always but coming. But every approximation to it is worthwhile."

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Wednesday, June 30, 2010

[Paul Krugman: The Third Depression](#)

The Third Depression

By PAUL KRUGMAN [article link](#)

June 27, 2010 | The New York Times Opinion

Recessions are common; depressions are rare. As far as I can tell, there were only two eras in economic history that were widely described as "depressions" at the time: the years of deflation and instability that followed the Panic of 1873 and the years of mass unemployment that followed the financial crisis of 1929-31.

Neither the Long Depression of the 19th century nor the Great Depression of the 20th was an era of nonstop decline — on the contrary, both included periods when the economy grew. But these episodes of improvement were never enough to undo the damage from the initial slump, and were followed by relapses.

We are now, I fear, in the early stages of a third depression. It will probably look more like the Long Depression than the much more severe Great Depression. But the cost — to the world economy and, above all, to the millions of lives blighted by the absence of jobs — will nonetheless be immense.

And this third depression will be primarily a failure of policy. Around the world — most recently at last weekend's deeply discouraging G-20 meeting — governments are obsessing about inflation when the real threat is deflation, preaching the need for belt-tightening when the real problem is inadequate spending.

In 2008 and 2009, it seemed as if we might have learned from history. Unlike their predecessors, who raised interest rates in the face of financial crisis, the current leaders of the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank slashed rates and moved to support credit markets. Unlike governments of the past, which tried to balance budgets in the face of a plunging economy, today's governments allowed deficits to rise. And better policies helped the world avoid complete collapse: the recession brought on by the financial crisis arguably ended last summer.

But future historians will tell us that this wasn't the end of the third depression, just as the business upturn that began in 1933 wasn't the end of the Great Depression. After all, unemployment — especially long-term unemployment — remains at levels that would have been considered catastrophic not long ago, and shows no sign of coming down rapidly. And both the United States and Europe are well on their way toward Japan-style deflationary traps.

In the face of this grim picture, you might have expected policy makers to realize that they haven't yet done enough to promote recovery. But no: over the last few months there has been a stunning resurgence of hard-money and balanced-budget orthodoxy.

As far as rhetoric is concerned, the revival of the old-time religion is most evident in Europe, where officials seem to be getting their talking points from the collected speeches of Herbert Hoover, up to and including the claim that raising taxes and cutting spending will actually expand the economy, by improving business confidence. As a practical matter, however, America isn't doing much better. The Fed seems aware of the deflationary risks — but what it proposes to do about these risks is, well, nothing. The Obama administration understands the dangers of premature fiscal austerity — but because Republicans and conservative Democrats in Congress won't authorize additional aid to state governments, that austerity is coming anyway, in the form of budget cuts at the state and local levels.

Why the wrong turn in policy? The hard-liners often invoke the troubles facing Greece and other nations around the edges of Europe to justify their actions. And it's true that bond investors have turned on governments with intractable deficits. But there is no evidence that short-run fiscal austerity in the face of a depressed economy reassures investors. On the contrary: Greece has agreed to harsh austerity, only to find its risk spreads growing ever wider; Ireland has imposed savage cuts in public spending, only to be treated by the markets as a worse risk than Spain, which has been far more reluctant to take the hard-liners' medicine.

It's almost as if the financial markets understand what policy makers seemingly don't: that while long-term fiscal responsibility is important, slashing spending in the midst of a depression, which deepens that depression and paves the way for deflation, is actually self-defeating.

So I don't think this is really about Greece, or indeed about any realistic appreciation of the tradeoffs between deficits and jobs. It is, instead, the victory of an orthodoxy that has little to do with rational analysis, whose main tenet is that imposing suffering on other people is how you show leadership in tough times.

And who will pay the price for this triumph of orthodoxy? The answer is, tens of millions of unemployed workers, many of whom will go jobless for years, and some of whom will never work again.

Paul Krugman joined The New York Times in 1999 as a columnist on the Op-Ed Page and continues as professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton University.

The New York Times [Articles](#) by Paul Krugman
The New York Times [home page](#)

Eight ways the Great Recession has changed Americans

Fifty-five percent of Americans in the labor force have experienced a job loss, a pay cut, or a reduction in hours since the onset of the Great Recession in 2007, a new survey finds.

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Amy Goodman: We Can't Afford War

We Can't Afford War

by Amy Goodman [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 30, 2010 | TruthDig | CommonDreams

“General Petraeus is a military man constantly at war with the facts,” began the [MoveOn.org](#) attack ad against Gen. David Petraeus back in 2007, after he had delivered a report to Congress on the status of the war in Iraq. George W. Bush was president, and MoveOn was accusing Petraeus of “cooking the books for the White House.” The campaign asked “General Petraeus or General Betray Us?” on a full-page ad in The Washington Post. MoveOn took tremendous heat for the campaign, but stood its ground.

Three years later, Barack Obama is president, Petraeus has become his man in Afghanistan, and MoveOn pulls the critical Web content. Why? Because Bush’s first war, Afghanistan, has become Obama’s war, a quagmire. The U.S. will eventually negotiate its withdrawal from Afghanistan. The only difference between now and then will be the number of dead, on all sides, and the amount of (borrowed) money that will be spent.

Petraeus' confirmation to become the military commander in Afghanistan was never in question. He replaces Gen. Stanley McChrystal, who resigned shortly after his macho criticisms of his civilian leadership became public in a recent Rolling Stone magazine article.

The statistics for Afghanistan, Obama's Vietnam, are surging. June, with at least 100 U.S. deaths, is the highest number reported since the invasion in 2001. 2010 is on pace to be the year with the highest U.S. fatalities. Similar fates have befallen soldiers from the other, so-called coalition countries. Petraeus is becoming commander not only of the U.S. military in Afghanistan, but of all forces, as the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan is run by NATO.

U.S. troops, expected to rise to 98,000 this year, far outnumber those from other nations. Public and political support in many of those countries is waning.

Journalist Michael Hastings, who wrote the Rolling Stone piece, was in Paris with McChrystal to profile him. What didn't get as much attention was Hastings' description of why McChrystal was there:

"He's in France to sell his new war strategy to our NATO allies—to keep up the fiction, in essence, that we actually have allies. Since McChrystal took over a year ago, the Afghan war has become the exclusive property of the United States. Opposition to the war has already toppled the Dutch government, forced the resignation of Germany's president and sparked both Canada and the Netherlands to announce the withdrawal of their 4,500 troops. McChrystal is in Paris to keep the French, who have lost more than 40 soldiers in Afghanistan, from going all wobbly on him."

The whistle-blower website WikiLeaks.org, which received international attention after releasing leaked video from a U.S. attack helicopter showing the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians and a Reuters cameraman and his driver in Baghdad, has just posted a confidential CIA memo detailing possible public relations strategies to counter waning public support for the Afghan War. The agency memo reads: "If domestic politics forces the Dutch to depart, politicians elsewhere might cite a precedent for 'listening to the voters.' French and German leaders have over the past two years taken steps to preempt an upsurge of opposition but their vulnerability may be higher now."

I just returned from Toronto, covering the G-20 summit and the protests. The gathered leaders pledged, among other things, to reduce government deficits by 50 percent by 2013. In the U.S., that means cutting \$800 billion, or about 20 percent of the budget. Two Nobel Prize-winning economists have weighed in with grave predictions. Joseph Stiglitz said, "There are many cases where these kinds of austerity measures have led to ... recessions into depressions." And Paul Krugman wrote: "Who will pay the price for this triumph of orthodoxy? The answer is, tens of millions of unemployed workers, many of whom will go jobless for years, and some of whom will never work again."

In order to make the cuts promised, Obama would have to raise taxes and cut social programs such as Social Security and Medicare. Or he could cut the war budget. I say "war budget" because it is not to be confused with a defense budget. Cities and states across the country are facing devastating budget crises. Pensions are being wiped out. Foreclosures are continuing at record levels. A true defense budget would shore up our schools, our roads, our towns, our social safety net. The U.S. House of Representatives is under pressure to pass a \$33 billion Afghan War supplemental this week.

We can't afford war.

Denis Moynihan contributed research to this column.

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Amy Goodman is the host of "[Democracy Now!](http://DemocracyNow.org)," a daily international TV/radio news hour airing on more than 800 stations in North America. She is the author of "[Breaking the Sound Barrier](http://BreakingtheSoundBarrier.com)," recently released in paperback and now a New York Times best-seller.

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The Mythology Surrounding Petraeus' Surge in Iraq Will Keep Us Trapped in Afghanistan

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Tuesday, June 29, 2010

Andrew Gavin Marshall: Revolution and Repression in America

Revolution and Repression in America

The Technological Revolution and the Future of Freedom, Part 2

by Andrew Gavin Marshall [article link](#)

June 29, 2010 | Global Research

This is Part 2 of the series, ``The Technological Revolution and the Future of Freedom.``

Part 1: [The Global Political Awakening and the New World Order](#)

Introduction

As outlined in Part 1 of this series, “The Technological Revolution and the Future of Freedom,” there are two major geopolitical realities in the world today, both largely brought about as a result of the “Technological Revolution” in which technology and electronics have come to define and shape our society.

The Technological Revolution has led to a diametrically opposed, antagonistic, and conflicting geopolitical reality: never before has humanity been so awakened to issues of power, exploitation, imperialism and domination; and simultaneously, never before have elites been so transnational and global in orientation, and with the ability to impose such a truly global system of scientific despotism and political oppression. These are the two major geopolitical realities of the world today. Never in all of human history has mankind been so capable of achieving a true global political psycho-social awakening; nor has humanity ever been in such danger of being subjected to a truly global scientific totalitarianism, potentially more oppressive than any system known before, and without a doubt more technologically capable of imposing a permanent despotism upon humanity. So we are filled with hope, but driven by urgency. In all of human history, never has the potential nor the repercussions of human actions and ideas ever been so monumental.

Not only is the awakening global in its reach, but in its very nature. It creates within the individual, an awareness of the global condition. So it is a ‘global awakening’ both in the external environment, and in the internal psychology. This new reality in the world, coupled with the fact that the world’s population has never been so vast, presents a challenge to elites seeking to dominate people all over the world who are aware and awakened to the realities of social inequality, war, poverty, exploitation, disrespect, imperialism and domination. This directly implies that these populations will be significantly more challenging to control: economically, politically, socially, psychologically and spiritually. Thus, from the point of view of the global oligarchy, the only method of imposing order and control – on this unique and historical human condition – is through the organized chaos of economic crises, war, and the rapid expansion and institutionalization of a global scientific dictatorship. Our hope is their fear; and our greatest fear is their only hope.

(See: [The Global Political Awakening and the New World Order](#))

This essay (Part II) will undertake an examination of these two geopolitical realities on a national scale, focusing primarily on the “American Awakening.”

The American Awakening

In the past decade, there has been an enormous surge in popular political activism, which has corresponded to the expansion of imperialism, exploitation and despotism in the world. The events of September 11th, 2001, sparked two major geopolitical events. The first was the implementation of the Bush Doctrine – the “War on Terror” – which was organized in response to the terrorist attacks. This imperialist expansion led to the war and occupation of Afghanistan, the war on Iraq and subsequent occupation, the war in Lebanon in 2006, the war on Somalia, continuing military expansionism and imposition in the Palestinian territories, as well as expansive covert operations in the Middle East, Central Asia, Africa and around the world.

The second major geopolitical trend instigated by the 9/11 attacks was the formation of what has come to be known as the “9/11 Truth Movement,” in which millions of people around the world, including thousands of academics, architects, engineers, government officials, intelligence and military officials and other professionals, as well as an exponentially growing abundance of people in the general population internationally have sought to question and challenge the official accounts of the events of 9/11. Like all activist groups, there are fringe and radical elements within the movement, those who claim that “no planes” were used in the attacks, or that the attacks were undertaken by Israel – with anti-Semitic undertones – or other such fringe theories. Regardless of the fringe elements, the main focus of the movement is based around the fact that the official story of events does not stand up to any form of independent and unbiased, rational analysis. The media for years ignored the growing international movement, but only in recent years have acknowledged the movement; however, they did not address the movement by analyzing the information and issues, but rather by seeking to discredit and demonize the political movement, focusing on the fringe elements and beliefs and applying labels of “conspiracy theorist,” attempting to discredit anyone who questions the official story.

In 2006, Time Magazine acknowledged that the 9/11 Truth Movement is not a “fringe movement,” but is, in fact, “a mainstream political reality.” They also cited a major political poll by Scripps-Howard in 2006, which revealed that 36% of Americans think it is “very likely” or “somewhat likely” that government officials either allowed the attacks to be carried out or carried out the attacks themselves.[1]

The growth of this movement spurred on major new movements and political activism, driven almost exclusively by organized and ‘politically awakened’ civilians. Driven largely by the Internet, this movement has awakened a mass of people globally to the political and strategic reality of what is known – in military terms – as a “false flag operation”, in which an attack is carried out against a certain target, where those undertaking the attack fly the flag of someone else (i.e., “false flag”) in an effort to implicate them in the attack; and thus the response to an attack would be against the perceived attackers. It is, essentially, a covert military strategem: a strategic deception. The Greek dramatist and playwright Aeschylus wrote that, “In war, the first casualty is truth.” A false flag attack an act of war that is deliberately designed to deceive and hide the truth. It is an attack carried out and blamed on one’s enemy in order to justify implementing a political agenda. Governments have used such tactics for centuries, and especially western nations in the past half-century.[2]

This movement has spawned an activist resurgence in other global issues, such as the global economic system, and most notably, the central banking system, particularly the Federal Reserve. While many Americans knew next to nothing about their central bank, the Federal Reserve, a growing movement of Americans and others around the world were educating themselves about the Federal Reserve System and the global banking system in general. Many found a leader in a Texas Congressman named Ron Paul, who campaigned on the Republican ticket for President in 2008, and who drew the widest grassroots support from across the nation of any Republican candidates. Among Democrats, “9/11 Truthers” and others critical of US foreign policy came to find a passionate leader in Cynthia McKinney, who was one of the lone voices in Congress to directly challenge the Bush administration on the official version of events, and has challenged the election fraud in 2000 and 2004, conducted a Congressional hearing on covert activities in Africa, exposing the hand of western nations behind the Rwandan genocide and Congo Civil War.

In late 2008, as the government began its financial bailout of the banks, the “End the Fed” movement emerged in sporadic protests at the 12 Federal Reserve Banks located around the country, and over 40 protests took place across the nation within a matter of months.[3]

The “Homeland Security State” Targets Dissenters

With the increasing militarization of foreign policy, we also see the increasing militarization of domestic politics, and most notably the emergence of a high-tech surveillance police state: a “Homeland Security State.” National and international elites are in the process of incrementally constructing a ‘new totalitarianism’ in replacing democracy.[4] Civil rights and freedoms are dismantled through anti-terrorist legislation, wiretapping and internet surveillance are rampant and expansive, “watch lists” are constructed, which often include the names of dissenters, and the military is increasingly poised to partake in policing. Further, over the past decade, we have seen the rapid expansion of “Continuity of Government” (COG) plans, which plan for the suspension of the Constitution and imposition of martial law in the event of an emergency.[5] At this point in American society, if there was a rapid and expansive economic collapse or another major terrorist attack on US soil, America would transform into a military government, more fascist in nature than anything; but equipped with an arsenal and “technetronic” police state the likes of which no dictator in history has had access to. Freedom has never been so threatened; yet, people have never been so mobilized in modern history to challenge the threats to freedom and democracy in America, in the west, and in the world.

(See: [The Transnational Homeland Security State and the Decline of Democracy](#))

In 2003, General Tommy Franks gave an interview with Cigar Aficionado magazine in which he elaborated on this concept. Tommy Franks was the former Commander of the Pentagon’s Central Command over the Middle East, and thus he was the top General overseeing the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In his interview with the magazine, Franks stated that the objective of terrorism is “to change the mannerisms, the behavior, the sociology and, ultimately, the anthropology of a society,” and thus, in the event of another major terrorist attack in America or in the West:

the western world, the free world, loses what it cherishes most, and that is freedom and liberty we've seen for a couple of hundred years in this grand experiment that we call democracy. Now, in a practical sense, what does that mean? It means the potential of a weapon of mass destruction and a terrorist, massive casualty-producing event somewhere in the western world—it may be in the United States of America—that **causes our population to question our own Constitution and to begin to militarize our country** in order to avoid a repeat of another mass-casualty-producing event. Which, in fact, then begins to potentially **unravel the fabric of our Constitution**.[6]

One interesting facet that very little is known about in the militarization of domestic society and incremental totalitarianism is how the coercive state apparatus, while being justified under the guise of fighting terrorism or “protecting the Homeland,” is in fact being directed against citizen activists and popular political movements. For example, following 9/11, the Department of Homeland Security established what are known as “Fusion Centers,” set up all over the United States, and which are designed as “information sharing and collecting” hubs, in which agencies like the CIA, FBI, Department of Justice, Homeland Security and the US Military collect and analyze information together. As of July 2009, there were 72 acknowledged Fusion Centers around the United States.[7] Think of them as local surveillance centers, because that’s what they are.

Fusion Centers are also positioned to take part as local command centers in the event of a national emergency or implementation of “Continuity of Government” plans to declare martial law. State and local law enforcement agencies provide the majority of information to the local Fusion Centers, which is then analyzed and disseminated to the major intelligence, military or Homeland Security departments and agencies. However, in recent years, Fusion Centers have been criticized for their purported agenda, as they are justified on the basis of acting as centers designated for “counter-terrorism” purposes, but in practice are directed against citizen groups.

In the spring of 2009, it was revealed that the Missouri Information Analysis Center (MIAC) – a Fusion Center – had put out an information pamphlet designed to help law enforcement officials identify “potential domestic terrorists.” According to the report:

If you're an anti-abortion activist, or if you display political paraphernalia supporting a third-party candidate or a certain Republican member of Congress, **if you possess subversive literature, you very well might be a member of a domestic paramilitary group.**[8]

When did our society become something out of 1984? When did our governments designate “subversive literature” as a sign of terrorism? The report classified such activities as being part of a “Modern Militia Movement,” and further identified “potential threats to American security” as:

People who supported former third-party presidential candidates like Texas Rep. Ron Paul, Chuck Baldwin and former Georgia Rep. Bob Barr are cited in the report, in addition to anti-abortion activists and conspiracy theorists who believe the United States, Mexico and Canada will someday form a North American Union.[9]

In other words, those who are opposed to the political and economic process of “North American integration”[10] are seen and identified as “potential militia members.” The report even directly identified possession of such films like the anti-Federal Reserve film, “America: Freedom to Fascism” as “potential signals of militia involvement.”[11] The document put out by the Fusion Center further warned law enforcement officials to be “on the lookout” for “bumper stickers advertising third party candidates, or people with copies of the United States Constitution.” The report wrote that due to the economic crisis, “a lush environment for militia activity has been created,” and:

It goes on to cite **possible militia members as people who talk about the New World Order conspiracy, express anger with the Federal Reserve banking system, resist paying taxes, warn other citizens about the perceived dangers of radio frequency identification (RFID) or lobby for a return to strict constitutionalism** as possible threats to law enforcement.

While the memo does offer something of a lopsided summary of many of the various groups which swelled enormously following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, it also links individuals who are otherwise peaceful with the Ku Klux Klan and other violent organizations.[12]

Another Fusion Center in Virginia identified many universities as potential “radicalization nodes” for terrorists, singling out “historically black colleges” as potential threats, and “it also contains an extensive list of peaceful American and International activist groups from nearly all cross-sections of political engagement, placing them side-by-side with groups that have long been known for resorting to violence.”[13]

In April of 2009, the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) released a report on the threat to liberties and civil rights posed by the Fusion Centers, saying that, “Fusion centers have experienced a mission creep in the last several years, becoming more of a threat than a security device. With no overarching guidelines to restrict or direct them, these centers put Americans’ privacy at huge risk.” The ACLU report identified several “troubling incidents” in regards to Fusion Centers violating privacy and civil rights:

- A May 7, 2008 report entitled “Universal Adversary Dynamic Threat Assessment” authored by a private contractor that labeled environmental organizations like the Sierra Club, the Humane Society and the Audubon Society as “**mainstream organizations with known or possible links to eco-terrorism**”;
- A potential abuse of authority by DHS officials who **improperly monitored and disseminated the communications of peace activists affiliated with the DC Anti-War Network (DAWN)**;
- A report produced on February 19, 2009 by the North Central Texas Fusion System entitled “Prevention Awareness Bulletin” which **described a purported conspiracy between Muslim civil rights organizations, lobbying groups, the anti-war movement, the U.S. Treasury Department, hip hop bands and former Congresswoman and presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney to “provide an environment for terrorist organizations to flourish”**;

- A “Strategic Report” produced February 20, 2009 by the Missouri Information Analysis Center that described a purported security threat posed by the “modern militia movement” but inappropriately included references to social, religious and political ideologies, including support of third party presidential candidates such as **Congressman Ron Paul and former Congressman Bob Barr**; and

- A “Protective Intelligence Bulletin” issued by the DHS Intelligence Branch of the Threat Management Division of the Federal Protective Service which **improperly collected and disseminated information regarding political demonstrations and inappropriately labeled peaceful advocacy groups and other activists as “extremists.”**[14]

To those in power, ‘peace’ is an ‘extremist’ idea, because ‘war’ and ‘violence’ are the norms to them. Now it has come to the point where those who challenge the structures of power are simply designated as terrorists and extremists. This is an incredibly dangerous political road at which the end is despotism and the death of democracy. Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, as one of those identified by Fusion Centers as providing “an environment for terrorist organizations to flourish,” had this to say about the Fusion Center report:

As a student of COINTELPRO, the government's infamous Counter-Intelligence Program [directed against the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s], I know what my government is capable of doing to quash dissent. That's why I voted against the Patriot Act, worked in Congress to roll back the Secret Evidence Act, and introduced legislation to repeal the Military Commissions Act. I come from a long legacy of activists for justice and freedom inside this country. I am on the advocacy front lines for peace abroad and justice at home. But I know that we will not have peace or justice without truth. Truth is the foundation of the dignity that we seek. **Dignity for all is not a threat to the United States.**[15]

It has become evident that the response of the American government to the “global political awakening” within the United States is aimed at demonizing, discrediting, and oppressing activist groups and political movements. But how far can this oppression go?

Detention Camps for Dissidents?

One startling and deeply concerning development in the area of “Homeland Security” is the highly secretive and deliberately quiet establishment of “detention centers” within the United States, designed to house millions of people in the event of an “emergency.” In 2002, Attorney General John Ashcroft “announced [a] desire for camps for U.S. citizens he deems to be ‘enemy combatants’,” and that his plan “would allow him to order the indefinite incarceration of U.S. citizens and summarily strip them of their constitutional rights and access to the courts by declaring them enemy combatants.”[16]

Also in 2002, it was reported that FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (now under the purview of the Department of Homeland Security), was “moving ahead with plans to create temporary cities that could handle millions of Americans after mass destruction attacks on U.S. cities.” Newsmax reported that, “FEMA was seeking bids from three major real estate and/or engineering firms to help prepare for the creation of the emergency cities, using tents and trailers – if an urban area is attacked by NBC (nuclear, chemical or biological) weapons.”[17]

In 2006, Dick Cheney’s former company, Halliburton, and its subsidiary company, Kellogg-Brown & Root (KBR) received a major contract from the Department of Homeland Security worth \$385 million, which was given “to support the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities in the event of an emergency.” A press release on KBR’s website stated that:

The contract, which is effective immediately, provides for establishing temporary detention and processing capabilities to augment existing ICE Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) Program facilities in the event of an emergency influx of immigrants into the U.S., **or to support the rapid development of new programs.**[18]

Further, it stated that, “The contract may also provide migrant detention support to other U.S. Government organizations in the event of an immigration emergency, as well as the development of a plan to react to a national emergency, such as a natural disaster. In the event of a natural disaster, the contractor could be tasked with providing housing for ICE personnel performing law enforcement functions in support of relief efforts.”[19]

Within two weeks, “Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff announced that the Fiscal Year 2007 federal budget would allocate over \$400 million to add 6,700 additional detention beds (an increase of 32 percent over 2006).” As historian and author Peter Dale Scott reported:

Both the contract and the budget allocation are in partial fulfillment of an ambitious 10-year Homeland Security strategic plan, code-named ENDGAME, authorized in 2003. According to a 49-page Homeland Security document on the plan, ENDGAME expands "a mission first articulated in the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798." **Its goal is the capability to "remove all removable aliens," including "illegal economic migrants, aliens who have committed criminal acts, asylum-seekers (required to be retained by law) or potential terrorists."**[20]

Considering that the government labels anti-war activists, libertarians, progressives, and other peaceful citizens groups as “extremists,” “paramilitary members” and “terrorists,” this is especially concerning. In 2008, a former US Congressman wrote an article for the San Francisco Chronicle in which he warned that, “Since 9/11, and seemingly without the notice of most Americans, the federal government has assumed the authority to institute martial law, arrest a wide swath of dissidents (citizen and noncitizen alike), and detain people without legal or constitutional recourse in the event of ‘an emergency influx of immigrants in the U.S., or to support the rapid development of new programs’.” He elaborated:

Beginning in 1999, the government has entered into a series of single-bid contracts with Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) **to build detention camps at undisclosed locations within the United States. The government has also contracted with several companies to build thousands of railcars, some reportedly equipped with shackles, ostensibly to transport detainees.**[21]

As Peter Dale Scott explained:

the contract evoked ominous memories of Oliver North's controversial Rex-84 "readiness exercise" in 1984. **This called for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to round up and detain 400,000 imaginary "refugees,"** in the context of "uncontrolled population movements" over the Mexican border into the United States. North's activities raised civil liberties concerns in both Congress and the Justice Department. The concerns persist.

"Almost certainly this is preparation for a roundup after the next 9/11 for Mid-Easterners, Muslims and possibly dissenters," says Daniel Ellsberg, a former military analyst who in 1971 released the Pentagon Papers, the U.S. military's account of its activities in Vietnam. "They've already done this on a smaller scale, with the 'special registration' detentions of immigrant men from Muslim countries, and with Guantanamo."

Plans for detention facilities or camps have a long history, going back to fears in the 1970s of a national uprising by black militants. As Alonzo Chardy reported in the Miami Herald on July 5, 1987, an executive order for continuity of government (COG) had been drafted in 1982 by FEMA head Louis Giuffrida. **The order called for "suspension of the Constitution" and "declaration of martial law."**[22]

More recently, there have been several reported incidents of small towns having major “detention centers” being built in them which remain empty and maintained for the event of an “emergency.” One such facility is being proposed for the City of Italy to build “a detention center for illegal immigrants.”[23] There was also an effort to have a detention center built in Benson City “to house illegal immigrants.”[24] A major American prison corporation, Corplan Corrections, “has been at the center of numerous controversies, including a bizarre prison-building scheme in Hardin, Montana that involved a private military force called American Police Force run by an ex-con. The prison cost the small town \$27 million but never housed any prisoners.” Further, Corplan “has approached city officials in several towns across the U.S. – Benson, Arizona; Las Cruces, New Mexico; and Weslaco, Texas – with a proposal to build a new detention center for immigrant families.”[25]

These facilities, built under the pretences of housing “illegal immigrants” yet largely remaining empty, could potentially be used to house not only immigrants, but also Muslims and “possibly dissenters” following a major emergency, such as an economic collapse or terrorist attack within the United States. After all, in World War II, Canada and the United States rounded up Japanese and German immigrants into internment camps. Again, it becomes evident that the response of power

structures to the manifestation of the global political awakening within the United States is to oppress and suppress the people, and with that, undermine democracy itself.

The Prospects of Revolution

During the first phase of the global economic crisis in December of 2008, the IMF warned governments of the prospect of “violent unrest on the streets.” The head of the IMF warned that, “violent protests could break out in countries worldwide if the financial system was not restructured to benefit everyone rather than a small elite.”[26] Naturally, the IMF director leaves out the fact that he is part of that small elite and that the IMF functions for the benefit of that very same elite.

In late December of 2008, “A U.S. Army War College report warn[ed] an economic crisis in the United States could lead to massive civil unrest and the need to call on the military to restore order.” The report stated that, “Widespread civil violence inside the United States would force the defense establishment to reorient priorities ... to defend basic domestic order and human security.”[27]

Throughout 2009, there was an abundance of civil unrest, protests and even riots all across Europe in response to the economic crisis. In February of 2009, Obama’s intelligence chief, Dennis Blair, the Director of National Intelligence, told the Senate Intelligence Committee that the economic crisis has become the greatest threat to U.S. national security:

I’d like to begin with the global economic crisis, because it already looms as the most serious one in decades, if not in centuries ... **Economic crises increase the risk of regime-threatening instability if they are prolonged for a one- or two-year period...** And instability can loosen the fragile hold that many developing countries have on law and order, which can spill out in dangerous ways into the international community.[28]

In other words, the economic crisis poses two major social threats to the “national security” (i.e., imperial status) of the United States. Of key importance is that America and other western nations may lose control of their colonial possessions and interests in the developing world – Africa, South America and Asia – as the people in those regions, the most “politically awakened” in the world, can cause “regime-threatening instability” as the prospects of riots, rebellion and revolution expose the failure of their national leaders and governance structures. This would pose an immense threat to the interests of the west in those regions, as they primarily rely upon local nation-states to control the populations and resources. Concurrently, these revolts could spread to the developing world. So western elites are faced with the prospects of possibly losing their control over the world’s resources and even their own domestic populations. The natural reaction, in imperial logic, is to militarize both the foreign and domestic spheres.

No wonder then, that in 2008, the highest-ranking general in the United States, “Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ranks the financial crisis as a higher priority and greater risk to security than current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.” He explained, “It’s a global crisis. And as that impacts security issues, or feeds greater instability, I think it will impact on our national security in ways that we quite haven’t figured out yet.”[29]

The head of the World Trade Organization (WTO) warned that, “The global economic crisis could trigger political unrest equal to that seen during the 1930s.” He elaborated, “The crisis today is spreading even faster (than the Great Depression) and affects more countries at the same time.”[30]

In February of 2009, renowned economic historian and Harvard professor, Niall Ferguson, predicted a “prolonged financial hardship, even civil war, before the ‘Great Recession’ ends,” and that, “The global crisis is far from over, [it] has only just begun, and Canada is no exception,” he said while at a speaking event in Canada. He explained, “Policy makers and forecasters who see a recovery next year are probably lying to boost public confidence,” while, “the crisis will eventually provoke political conflict.” He further explained:

There will be blood, in the sense that **a crisis of this magnitude is bound to increase political as well as economic [conflict]. It is bound to destabilize some countries. It will cause civil wars to break out**, that have been dormant. **It will topple governments that were moderate and bring in governments that are extreme.** These things are pretty predictable.[31]

Even in May of 2009, the head of the World Bank warned that, “the global economic crisis could lead to serious social upheaval,” as “there is a risk of a serious human and social crisis with very serious political implications.”[32] Zbigniew Brzezinski himself warned in February of 2009 that, “There's going to be growing conflict between the classes and if people are unemployed and really hurting, hell, there could be even riots!”[33]

In March of 2010, Moody's, a major credit ratings agency, warned that “social unrest” is coming to the west, as the US, the UK, Germany, France, and Spain “are all at risk of soaring debt costs and will have to implement austerity plans that threaten ‘social cohesion’.”[34]

In 2007, a British Defence Ministry report was released assessing global trends in the world over the next 30 years. In assessing “Global Inequality”, the report stated that over the next 30 years:

[T]he gap between rich and poor will probably increase and absolute poverty will remain a global challenge... Disparities in wealth and advantage will therefore become more obvious, with their associated grievances and resentments, even among the growing numbers of people who are likely to be materially more prosperous than their parents and grandparents. **Absolute poverty and comparative disadvantage will fuel perceptions of injustice among those whose expectations are not met, increasing tension and instability, both within and between societies and resulting in expressions of violence such as disorder, criminality, terrorism and insurgency. They may also lead to the resurgence of not only anti-capitalist ideologies, possibly linked to religious, anarchist or nihilist movements, but also to populism and the revival of Marxism.**[35]

Further, the report warned of the dangers to the established powers of a revolution emerging from the disgruntled middle classes of the west:

The middle classes could become a revolutionary class, taking the role envisaged for the proletariat by Marx. The globalization of labour markets and reducing levels of national welfare provision and employment could reduce peoples' attachment to particular states. The growing gap between themselves and a small number of highly visible super-rich individuals might fuel disillusion with meritocracy, while the growing urban under-classes are likely to pose an increasing threat to social order and stability, as the burden of acquired debt and the failure of pension provision begins to bite. Faced by these twin challenges, **the world's middle-classes might unite, using access to knowledge, resources and skills to shape transnational processes in their own class interest.**[36]

From the Old World to the New

So here we are, in the year 2010, the end of the first decade of the 21st century; and what a century it has been thus far: 9/11, a recession, the war on Afghanistan, the “war on terror”, the war on Iraq, terrorist attacks in Bali, Madrid, London and all across the Middle East; the war on Somalia, the Congo Civil War (the deadliest conflict since World War II, with upwards of 6 million innocent civilians killed since 1996); the Russia-Georgia war, the expansion of the war into Pakistan, the election of Barack Obama, the global economic crisis and here we are.

All of human history is the story of the struggle of free humanity – the individual and the collective – against the constructs of power, which sought to dominate and control humanity. From humanity's origins in Africa, civilizations rose and fell, dominated and decimated. From Ancient Egypt to Greece and Rome, the Chinese dynasties, the Mayans and Aztecs, all sought domination of land and people. The Persian Empire and the Ottoman Empire expanded and controlled vast populations and diverse people; and with the emergence of Capitalism came the emergence of the European powers.

For the past 500 years, Europe and America have dominated the world; and in fact, only in the last 65 years has America dominated the globe. The Peace of Westphalia was signed in 1648, ending the Thirty Years' War in the Holy Roman Empire and the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands. This agreement effectively ended the Holy Roman Empire, and marked the emergence of the idea of the modern nation-state. University studies in International Relations begin with the Peace of Westphalia, as it is viewed as the beginning of the international system we know today.

Out of this emerged the great European empires: the Portuguese, the Spanish, the Dutch, and later the French, British and German empires, which created the first global political economy with the Atlantic Slave Trade, trading weapons and goods in exchange for captured slaves, fueling internal civil wars among the large African empires to feed them a supply of slaves which they then took to the Americas to use as a labour force. That labour force would produce goods taken back to Europe, traded among the world's empires, and ultimately financing the continued flow of weapons into Africa. It was a triangular trade between Europe, Africa and the Americas. At this time, the notion of 'race' originated through a series of legal decisions made in the colonies.

In the 1600s, the colonies in the Americas were made up of white, Indian and black indentured labourers and slaves, both 'un-free blacks and whites, with blacks being a minority, yet they still "exercised basic rights in law." A problem arose for elites attempting to control the labour class: the un-free native labour force knew the land and could escape easily (so they would later be largely eliminated through genocide); and in the 1660s, the labour class was becoming rebellious, where black and white labourers worked together and rebelled against local elites. The entire lower class of society was united – regardless of their varied and expansive differences – and they were united against the elites. Thus, a doctrine of 'divide and conquer' was implemented against the psycho-social foundations of the people.[37]

The elite "relaxed the servitude" of the white labourers, and "intensified the bonds of black slavery," and subsequently "introduced a new regime of racial oppression. In doing so, they effectively created the white race – and with it white supremacy." Thus, "the conditions of white and black servants began to diverge considerably after 1660." Following this, legislation would separate white and black slavery, prevent "mixed" marriages, and seek to prevent the procreation of "mixed-race" children. Whereas before 1660, many black slaves were not indentured for life, this changed as colonial law increasingly "imposed lifetime bondage for black servants – and, especially significant, the curse of lifetime servitude for their offspring." [38]

A central feature of the social construction of this racial divide was "the denial of the right to vote," as most Anglo-American colonies previously allowed free blacks to vote, but this slowly changed throughout the colonies. The ruling class of America was essentially "inventing race." Thus, "Freedom was increasingly identified with race, not class." [39]

In 1648, the nation-state emerged; in 1660, racism was created through legal decisions; and in 1694, the Bank of England was created and the birth of the central banking system took place. All of these were essentially 'social constructions' – nation, race, currency – in which they are simply ideas that are accepted as reality. A nation is not a physical entity, race has no true basis for discrimination or hierarchy, and a currency has no actual value. They only hold as true because everyone accepts them as true.

From this period of immense transition, European imperial nations dominated the world; racism justified their domination, and central banks dominated the empires at home and abroad. The 1800s saw the Industrial Revolution, which instigated the decline of slavery and the emergence of paid labour and hourly wages. Eventually, the notion of 'race science' emerged within the eugenics movement, originating in Europe, and later migrating to the United States in the late 19th century. This helped justify the 'Scramble for Africa', which began in the 1880s and entailed the European empires formally colonizing the entire continent of Africa, carving it into nations among them, but justifying it on the basis of a racist "civilizing mission."

The European imperial age declined with World War I, a battle of empires and economies. This led to the collapse of many European empires as well as the Ottoman and Russian empires, with the emergence of the Soviet Union as well as nation-states in the Middle East. The emergence of fascism took root in the 1920s and 30s, and grew to coalesce in World War II, which led to the ultimate decline of the British and French empires, and the emergence of the American empire.

America became the engine of empire for the Atlantic community, Europe and North America. It created and ran international organizations allowing for transnational elites to share power among an increasingly global – an increasingly smaller – group of elites. The World, for nearly fifty years, was defined as a global struggle between Communism and Democracy – between the Soviet Union and the West. This historical myth hides the face of global domination: a struggle between two blocs for global domination of the world's people and resources.

With the end of the Cold War came the emergence of the New World Order, a world in which there was only one global power: the United States. I was born shortly before the Berlin Wall came down, and I developed a memory only after the Soviet Union collapsed; the only world I know is the one in which the United States has been the only global power. I know only the era of 'globalization' and the promises it made my generation. Think of the effect upon the youth this great period of transition will have.

The history of humanity is one of constant change, sometimes slow and incremental, at other times rapid and expansive. Today, we are in a period in which we are seeing a convergence of never-before-seen global realities. The population of the world has never been so monumentally large – at 6.8 billion – and among the global population, for the first time in human history, there is a true “global political awakening.” This does not mean that everyone is correct in their views, but it does mean that the world's people are thinking and acting – even if incidentally or unknowingly – about the global polity. This is most especially so in the areas where the Atlantic world has dominated for so long, as they have been subjected to poverty, racism, and war like no other people on earth. Their ‘awakening’ was forced upon them, and the west is now having its awakening forced upon it.

At our current position, we are about to undergo a global historical period of transition, the likes of which has never before been seen. The incremental and slow building ‘global political awakening’ that emerged around the world in the past century, is reaching a precipice and rapid expansion at the beginning of the 21st century. Global power has never been so centralized, with international institutions and systems of global governance holding authority over several realms of humanity. We are partaking in global wars seeking to dominate populations and control resources, democracy is eroding in the west, and wealth disparities have never been so great in all of human history.

For the first time in the last 500 years, the East has risen – with China and India – as new global powers, rising within the system not against it; marking the first time that nation-states have not risen against the global power, but with the global power. China and India are being brought within a new global political and economic system that is being constructed: a global totalitarian system of continental colonies to a global state. In 1998, then Secretary-General of NATO, Javier Solana, gave a speech in which he said:

It is my general contention that humanity and democracy - two principles essentially irrelevant to the original Westphalian order - can serve as guideposts in **crafting a new international order**, better adapted to the security realities, and challenges, of today's Europe.[40]

Further, he explained, “the Westphalian system had its limits. For one, the principle of sovereignty it relied on also produced the basis for rivalry, not community of states; exclusion, not integration.” Thus, to truly have global power, the international system of nation-states must be ‘re-imagined’ and altered: first, into continental governance structures, and ultimately a global structure. As Solana said, “In the United Nations, **the ideal of a global institution including all nations became a reality**,” and “the ideal of European integration was set in motion.” He elaborated:

But an integral part of the evolution of the Atlantic Alliance was the idea of reconciliation: **the integration of our militaries, the common project of collective defence, and the willingness to work towards a common approach** to defend the Alliance's common values.

Unfortunately, also out of the same ashes of the second world war emerged the East-West confrontation that left Europe deeply divided for more than four decades. As our century comes to an end, we at last have the opportunity to overcome this division and to set free all the creative energies this continent can muster to **build the new security order which will lead us into the 21st century**.[41]

It is a difficult balancing act for global powers – particularly the United States – to manage the integration of China into the ‘new world order’, while simultaneously both of them compete for control of global resources, located primarily in regions of the world which are experiencing the most rapid and extensive ‘awakening’. The imperial mindset – like that of Brzezinski's – seeks to rationalize global power as being equated with ‘global stability’, and that without empire, there is only ‘chaos’. Thus, imperial logic dictates that America must seek to dominate as much of the world as fast as possible, and hence control global resources, which will allow it to determine the terms of China and other powers' inclusion in the new

world order. This has the potential to spark a global war – a World War III type of scenario between the NATO powers and the China-Russia alliance – the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) – who seek to share power, not to be dominated. Global populations at home and abroad have never been so challenging to control: global war is inevitable in the imperial mindset. As Brzezinski himself stated in a speech to Chatham House in London in 2009:

But these major world powers, new and old, also face a novel reality: **while the lethality of their military might is greater than ever, their capacity to impose control over the politically awakened masses of the world is at a historic low.** To put it bluntly: in earlier times, it was easier to control one million people than to physically kill one million people; **today, it is infinitely easier to kill one million people than to control one million people.**[42]

In many people's view of the global economic crisis, the problem was 'greed'. Greed is not the problem, it is but a symptom of the disease that is 'power'; which, like a cancer, expands and kills its host. Humanity is entering what will likely be the most turbulent period in human history. The future is not yet written; all that is certain is that everything will change. What it comes down to is the greatest human struggle in the history of our small little planet: the struggle of the world's people – in every corner of the world, from every religion, 'race', ethnicity, ideology, language, sex, gender and variation – against a global power elite who control the most advanced, technological, and lethal tools of oppression every conceived. Make no mistake, we are not repeating history, we are making it.

The Power of Ideas

Our awakening is the greatest threat to these global elites, and it is our only hope of protecting any notions of freedom, liberty, family, equality and individuality. It is these notions that have led to and created the greatest developments and ideas in human history. Humanity's best is within these concepts, and its worst is within power. The shame of humanity is within its systems of power, so for humanity to survive we must re-imagine and remodel our global system and global power.

We cannot design a society for humanity without taking into consideration human nature. If you build it, they will come. If we keep creating positions of great power, and continually globalize power, it will attract exactly the wrong type of people to those positions of power: the ones that want it and want to abuse the power. These people are more likely to get to these positions of power because they are willing to do anything to get there, which means that once they have it, they will do anything to maintain and expand it. And so power grows, and the cancer spreads. Imagine if Hitler's rise to power took place not in the era of nation-states, but in the era of the 'global state.' All that is required is one tyrant, and humanity is nothing if not proof that there are always tyrants in waiting.

What is a nation? Is it an army, a flag, an anthem, or a building of government? A nation is an idea – and is constructed by a series of ideas. There is no 'real' border, it is an imaginary line, and everyone in the world pretends they are there, and nation-states (which are really people who are in control of these ideas), govern accordingly. Now we are in a period in which elites are attempting to re-imagine the international community, to erase the 'idea' of borders, and to ultimately re-program humanity to follow their example. Social planners seek to control not simply our land, resources and bodies, but most importantly, our minds. World government will be sold to us on the 'ideas' of peace, something all of humanity wants; all save the powerful, for war and conflict is the means through which power is accumulated and society is transformed.

True peace will never be possible with a singular global power structure; for once power is globally centralized, what more can the powerful seek to achieve? Thus, the powerful fight each other for control of the centralized authority, paranoia governs their minds, and distrust and hatred directs their actions. Power subsequently becomes its own worst enemy, as it eats away at its host and destroys the body within which it lives.

True peace can only come from human understanding. Free humanity must understand each other if we are to live among each other. We cannot any longer view each other through the lenses of power: through the media, government, economic, and social structures. These structures are designed with the intent to mislead and misrepresent people, they are illegitimate and must be considered as such. We must view and understand each other on a human level: on ideas of freedom, liberty, family, equality and individually. To achieve that understanding, one realizes that freedom must be for all or none, that

liberty is not to be selective, the importance of family, the necessity of equality and the acceptance and celebration of individuality. With that, peace is inevitable. With power, peace is impossible.

Just as elites seek to re-imagine and recreate our world, we too, can do the same. This must begin with the human understanding, where we enter into a new Renaissance or Enlightenment, not western, but global; where the people communicate and interact with each other on a personal basis, not through elite structures. This must be the aim of the global political awakening: to achieve peace through peaceful means. If everyone in the world simply decided to no longer acknowledge people and positions of power, that power would vanish. If there is no army, because the soldiers decided to no longer recognize the government, there is no one to pull the trigger on people in the street.

I think, therefore I am. If I think I am free, I will become free. But while an individual can do this, it does not work if everyone doesn't do it. This requires all people, everywhere, to work together, talk together, learn together, think together and act together. We can either do this now, or potentially be subdued for decades if not longer. If we do not achieve global peace and freedom for all people, if we do not understand each other, power will win, at least for a while. What is important to note is that the emergence of a technetronic society reduces the need for people, as technology can watch, listen, control and kill people with the push of a button. We are also in danger of becoming a docile, tranquilized society, lost in drugs – whether recreational or even more notably, pharmaceutical. We must avoid entering into a 'brave new world', and instead bravely construct a different world.

From the militarization of domestic society, it would appear as if we are moving into a world quite reminiscent of George Orwell's 1984, in which the world is divided into a few major regional blocs that war against each other and terrorize their populations through acts of physical terror and total surveillance ("Big Brother"). This is but a phase and evolution into the final stage – the grand idea – or as Aldous Huxley referred to it, "The Ultimate Revolution": the global scientific dictatorship. That will be the focus of the third and final part in this series.

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This is Part 2 of the series, ``The Technological Revolution and the Future of Freedom.``

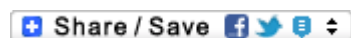
Part 1: [The Global Political Awakening and the New World Order](#)

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Monday, June 28, 2010

[Stephen Lendman: Competing Ideologies: G20 v US Social Forum](#)

Competing Ideologies: G20 v. US Social Forum

By Stephen Lendman [article link](#)

June 28, 2010 | OpEdNews

Established in 1999, G20 finance ministers, central bank governors, and, at times, heads of state meet semi-annually to "discuss key issues in the global economy," the initial 1999 meeting in Berlin, hosted by German and Canadian finance ministers.

G20.org calls its itself "the premier forum for our international economic development that promotes open and constructive discussion between industrial and emerging-market countries on key issues related to global economic stability," saying it "support(s) growth and development across the globe," or does it?

The reality suggests otherwise about a political power elite gathering to review past achievements, challenges, and prospects for greater exploitation of world markets, resources, and people everywhere. In other words, to support power and privilege over beneficial social change, a consideration not addressed, discussed, or thought about, except with regard to instituting policies leading to the disintegration and elimination of social democracies, replacing them with the worst elements of developing world harshness, tolerating no opposition.

What economist Michael Hudson suggested in his recent article titled, "[Europe's Fiscal Dystopia: The 'New Austerity' Road to Financial Serfdom](#)," saying:

"Europe is committing fiscal suicide - and will have little trouble finding allies at this weekend's G-20 meetings," attendees "calling for cutbacks in public spending" when economic recovery requires stimulus, job creation, and public investment, not global wars, banker bailouts, or other counterproductive measures.

Hudson called the meeting "a carefully orchestrated financial war against the 'real' economy," initiated in America, Obama having "stacked his White House Deficit Commission....with the same brand of neoliberal ideologues who comprised the notorious 1982 Greenspan Commission on Social Security 'reform,' " a topic this writer addressed earlier in a "maestro of misery" article about a man who wrecked the lives of millions for the rich, now cashing in big late in life, claiming no responsibility for decades of harm, a legacy others won't let him forget.

Now it's going global, why Hudson sees Europe "dying....succumb(ing) to a financial coup d'etat rolling back the past three centuries of Enlightenment social philosophy." In lock step, America is erasing its New Deal and Great Society gains, planning mass impoverishment, human misery, and fascist harshness, the hidden G20 agenda not reported in the mainstream, sticking to its party line propaganda, the usual rubbish top officials preach to conceal their real plans from hell.

The G20 - An Explanation

Comprising 85% of global GDP, 80% of world trade, and two-thirds of its population, participating countries include America, Canada, Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Spain (a permanent guest), China, Japan, India, South Korea, Indonesia, Russia, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Turkey, Australia, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia as well as EU Council and Commission Presidents.

Other attendees include:

- the IMF's managing director and chairman;
- the World Bank's president;
- the international Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC); and
- chairman of the IMF/World Bank Development Committee.

Even though they rank higher economically than some members, excluded are Switzerland, Norway, Taiwan, Iran and Venezuela. Included only as part of the EU are Spain, Netherlands, Poland, Belgium, Sweden, Austria, Greece and Denmark.

The G20 superseded the G33 that replaced the G22. The year 1975 inaugurated the G6 comprised of America, France, Germany, Britain, Italy and Japan. Adding Canada in 1976 made it the G7, then G8 by including Russia in 1997, the EU also included, but it doesn't host or chair.

On June 26 and 27, 2010, G20 officials met inside the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Canada. Thousands of protestors filled city streets outside, Reuters reporting over 600 arrested, many in a so-called "free speech zone," police spokeswoman Michelle Murphy calling it "quite a messy protest" on Saturday, continuing on Sunday, accusing "masked anarchists" of smashing store and bank windows, then torching two or more police cars.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper said "Free speech is a principle of our democracy, but thugs (provocateurs he dispatched) that prompted violence earlier today represent in no way, shape or form the Canadian way of life," he and his government have been systematically destroying in league with Washington.

Against peaceful activists were more than six KM of barriers topped with concertina wire, thousands of newly installed surveillance cameras, patrolling helicopters, the Canadian Armed Forces at undisclosed locations, and over 7,000 police, plain clothes officers, mounted patrols, snipers on rooftops, US Navy Seals (trained killers), about 1,000 private security guards, and planted ("Black Bloc") provocateurs. More on them below.

Police, acting as hooligans, used tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets, bean bag guns, batons, and other intimidations, a security operation costing Canada a reported \$1.2 billion, the Harper government's communications director, Dimitri Soudas, calling protestors "a bunch of thugs who pretend to have a difference of opinions and instead choose violence in order to express" them, adding that police were "ensuring these thugs don't rampage across the city and create even more damage."

In fact, protestors were peaceful, but not police, independent reports saying they exhibited extreme brutality, including against journalists (men and women), beating and punching them, injuring others, and arresting hundreds, some before the summit convened to intimidate others.

Protest organizer, Niki Thorne, reported that 20 police raided her house and arrested four people, saying:

"Police forcibly detained and cuffed a number of people, and refused to allow those in the house to call for legal advice. Without showing warrants, asking consent, or giving notice, (they) did an illegal cursory search of some of the people on the premises as well as the house itself."

According to the Toronto Globe and Mail, those arrested were charged with conspiracy to commit mischief, police alleging they were "planning to break off from peaceful protest and launch violent attacks," with no corroborating evidence.

In fact, quite the opposite, according to reports, video, and other evidence exposing undercover police violence, posing as "street thugs," hooded and dressed in black (the so-called "Black Bloc"), instigating disorder and brutishness, destroying public property, smashing windows, burning police cars, blamed on protestors - an old story in Canada, America, and other global venues to blame state crimes on peaceful activists, the major media reporting it without question, independent journalists kept away to suppress it, public perceptions manipulated by misinformation.

This is how a police state operates, Ameri/Canadian fascism, making false accusations and arrests, employing hooligan tactics against peaceful protestors, and refusing non-mainstream reporters entry into Canada, others arrested to prevent their coverage - violating Section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a constitutional bill of rights, affirming:

"freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media communication (as well as) freedom of peaceful assembly (and) freedom of association."

The US Social Forum (USSF) - Another World is Possible

Evolving from the World Social Forum's (WSF) alternative vision, the USSF first met in Atlanta in mid-2007, this year in Detroit for activists, organizers, minorities, labor, the poor, indigenous peoples and others wanting social justice and a better world, mirror-opposite of the G20 agenda - supporting privilege over the common good, plotting to extinguish those old-fashioned notions, forcibly when necessary.

On its web site (ussf2010.org), USSF headlines "Another World is Possible, Another US Is Necessary," calling itself:

"a movement building process. It is not a conference but is a space to come up with the peoples' solutions to the economic and ecological crisis. (It's) the next important step in our struggle to build a powerful multi-racial, multi-sectoral, inter-generational, diverse, inclusive, internationalist movement that transforms this country and changes history."

"We must declare what we want our world to look like and we must start planning the path to get there. The USSF provides spaces to learn from each other's experiences and struggles, share our analysis of the problems our communities face, build relationships, and align with our international brothers and sisters to strategize how to reclaim our world."

No wonder, the major media ignore it, instead supporting power and privilege, corporate interests, imperial wars, democracy for the few, sham elections, and street thuggery hooliganism. At the same time, social justice concerns are suppressed, ones affecting most people everywhere, their voices never heard, their issues unaddressed, their struggles disregarded and spurned.

But not in Detroit from June 22 - 26, ground zero for the failed economy and counterproductive measures causing it, over 20,000 attending in solidarity for a better world, one that can't come a moment too soon, that won't happen without mass grassroots support no longer tolerating official policies preventing it - in Toronto, Washington, or other global cities where governments deny their own people justice. What better time for change than now, USSF's agenda an inspirational call for it.

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Socialist Project: Mass Arrests, the Security State and the Toronto G20 Summit

Mass Arrests, the Security State and the Toronto G20 Summit

by Socialist Project [article link](#)

June 27, 2010 | Socialist Project | Global Research

The massive police presence in Toronto over this week has been officially justified on the basis of protecting the leaders of the G8 and G20 countries meeting in Huntsville and Toronto. We were told that the creation of the fenced-in fortress, the massive mobilization of police (estimates ranging from 10-20,000) from across Canada, and even the passing of a secret law on policing (by the executive of the Ontario government without reference to the Legislative Assembly and the opposition parties) that made it a crime to appear within five metres of the security fence would protect our right to protest as well.

This is not what has unfolded in Toronto over the weekend.

Thousands of protesters marched peacefully on Friday, challenging the purpose and agenda of the G20, although completely hemmed on all sides by thousands of heavily armed police over the entire march (and severely hampering the freedom of assembly). On Saturday, in the midst of a larger demonstration (estimated at between 10-25,000), organized by the labour, anti-privatization and peace movements, a series of unwarranted acts of vandalism by a small number of protesters against stores, vehicles and buildings, was used as an excuse for a massive unleashing of repression and attacks by police against the democratic rights of both protestors, and Torontonians as a whole. (Like what happened at the Montebello Summit of North American leaders in August 2007, it will come out over the next weeks how widely the police had infiltrated some of the key groups – especially the so-called Black Bloc, knew the planning and participated as agent provocateurs.)

There seemed to be no real efforts on the part of the police to stop the attacks on the stores. As well, none of the massive police contingents tried to stop some of this small group from burning three of their police vehicles. It was as if the police weren't all that concerned with these actions. Reporters from European broadcasters and newspapers reported that this was totally out of keeping with any real concern to prevent violence.

The police then unleashed waves of repression against the legitimate protesters, those who wished to push toward the security fence – in an effort to challenge the militarization of the streets and demand that the G20 leaders respond to concerns about austerity and attacks on poor and working people – those who were simply voicing their concerns about the G20 agenda (with its radical austerity agenda of having the public sector and the poor pay for the bailout of the banks), journalists and even innocent and curious bystanders. In one attack on a “free protest” zone (previously negotiated with the police) rubber bullets and tear gas was used, and people were indiscriminately taken down, beaten and arrested.

In all, by Sunday morning estimates were that some 500 people were arrested (and there have been hundreds more over the course of today); it is impossible for anyone to know how many of these were the instigators of violence and how many were people simply exercising their right to protest. But clearly the mass majority were only protesting and exercising their rights to assembly and free speech, which the Toronto police and the wider security forces have been systematically violating.

The temporary jail that protestors have been placed in is located at the old Toronto Film Studios on Eastern Avenue in the eastern edge of the downtown, converted into a series of cages in essentially a huge warehouse. The jail is described by inmates as a kind of Guantanamo North: cold, dirty and especially humiliating for those who were said to have refused arrest. People have been held for hours without recourse to legal representation, of which there has been a large legal team at hand. Protesters hoping to provide some type of support for those incarcerated, have themselves been attacked, tear-gassed and dispersed by police violence.

Listening to the mass media and the interviews with the police and security spokespeople for Toronto and the Canadian state, one would have thought that there was full scale rioting, and that the massive, billion dollar spending spree on security for the Summit – that angered people across the country – was somehow worth it. As part of this, all protesters are being demonized and the police are being portrayed as heroes, notably by the political leadership and the Mayor of Toronto, David Miller.

The message of the protests (and of the thousands who protested across the week at hundreds of talks, meetings, protests, cultural events) – that the G20 meeting reflected the underlying agenda of the corporations and the political elites, to make sharp cutbacks across the public sector, to impose wage cuts, to not raise significant (or any) new taxes on financial capital and to impose new forms of hardship in the form of higher taxes and cuts in benefits for working people and the poor – was to be drowned out in a demonizing of the entire project of the protest. That is, that the ruling classes in the G20 were doing everything in their power to have the working classes pay for the crisis and their project of re-constructing neoliberalism and the political hegemony of the banks and financial capital.

The police and much of Toronto's political and economic establishment, sought to use the incidents to change the entire discourse of the G20 week.

Socialists, of course, take their distance from the foolish acts of the few who confuse violent attacks and trashing with revolutionary politics. This is to substitute individual acts of dissent for the working class and the mass movement as a whole. It is the adventurism that calls forth the most violent features of the security and policing apparatuses of the state, catching hundreds of innocents in the wake, and helps justify to the endless expansion of the security state. To challenge the neoliberal globalization agenda of the G20, and overturn all the undemocratic exploitative relations of capitalism, we need to build a political movement in Canada, based among the working classes who don't earn their income from capital ownership, and who also are oppressed by the unequal relations of race, gender, sexuality and nationality.

At this moment, it is a point of fundamental solidarity to denounce, as forcefully as possible, the police repression being unleashed against G20 protesters. We insist that those incarcerated on Eastern Avenue have their full civil rights restored and that civilian authorities take control from the Toronto Police Services of oversight of these proceedings. They have

proven incapable of protecting – and understanding – basic civil rights (starting from the special emergency powers asked for by Police Chief Blair, and granted by stealth by Premier Dalton McGuinty). The accused should immediately be released without charge, or be freed on bail and given the right to defend themselves in open courts (not the kangaroo courts with limited or no public access that have been operating over this week).

The police occupation of Toronto should end immediately, and our full civil rights – and especially our rights to our city and streets – be restored. There clearly will need to be a full and independent investigation about the role of the police in the violence of the last few days, the role of agent provocateurs and plants in the planning of these events and the astonishing violation of the rights of ordinary people and protesters alike on the streets of Toronto over the last week.

G20 Police State: Toronto is burning! Or is it?

by Judy Rebick [article link](#)

June 27, 2010 | Global Research

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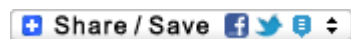
The G20 Toronto Summit Declaration

BY RABBLE STAFF [article link](#)

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Naomi Klein: Sticking the Public With the Bill for the Bankers' Crisis

Sticking the Public With the Bill for the Bankers' Crisis

How else can we interpret the G20 communiqué that includes not even a measly tax on financial transactions?

by Naomi Klein [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 28, 2010 | The Globe and Mail (Canada) | CommonDreams

My city feels like a crime scene and the criminals are all melting into the night, fleeing the scene. No, I'm not talking about the kids in black who smashed windows and burned cop cars on Saturday.

I'm talking about the heads of state who, on Sunday night, smashed social safety nets and burned good jobs in the middle of a recession. Faced with the effects of a crisis created by the world's wealthiest and most privileged strata, they decided to stick the poorest and most vulnerable people in their countries with the bill.

How else can we interpret the G20's [final communiqué](#), which includes not even a measly tax on banks or financial transactions, yet instructs governments to slash their deficits in half by 2013. This is a huge and shocking cut, and we should be very clear who will pay the price: students who will see their public educations further deteriorate as their fees go up; pensioners who will lose hard-earned benefits; public-sector workers whose jobs will be eliminated. And the list goes on. These types of cuts have already begun in many G20 countries including Canada, and they are about to get a lot worse.

They are happening for a simple reason. When the G20 met in London in 2009, at the height of the financial crisis, the leaders failed to band together to regulate the financial sector so that this type of crisis would never happen again. All we got was empty rhetoric, and an agreement to put trillions of dollars in public monies on the table to shore up the banks around the world. Meanwhile the U.S. government did little to keep people in their homes and jobs, so in addition to hemorrhaging public money to save the banks, the tax base collapsed, creating an entirely predictable debt and deficit crisis.

At this weekend's summit, Prime Minister Stephen Harper convinced his fellow leaders that it simply wouldn't be fair to punish those banks that behaved well and did not create the crisis (despite the fact that Canada's highly protected banks are consistently profitable and could easily absorb a tax). Yet somehow these leaders had no such concerns about fairness when they decided to punish blameless individuals for a crisis created by derivative traders and absentee regulators.

Last week, The Globe and Mail published [a fascinating article about the origins of the G20](#). It turns out the entire concept was conceived in a meeting back in 1999 between then finance minister Paul Martin and his U.S. counterpart Lawrence Summers (itself interesting since Mr. Summers was at that time playing a central role in creating the conditions for this financial crisis -- allowing a wave of bank consolidation and refusing to regulate derivatives).

The two men wanted to expand the G7, but only to countries they considered strategic and safe. They needed to make a list but apparently they didn't have paper handy. So, according to reporters John Ibbitson and Tara Perkins, "the two men grabbed a brown manila envelope, put it on the table between them, and began sketching the framework of a new world order." Thus was born the G20.

The story is a good reminder that history is shaped by human decisions, not natural laws. Mr. Summers and Mr. Martin changed the world with the decisions they scrawled on the back of that envelope. But there is nothing to say that citizens of G20 countries need to take orders from this hand-picked club.

Already, workers, pensioners and students have taken to the streets against austerity measures in Italy, Germany, France, Spain and Greece, often marching under the slogan: "We won't pay for your crisis." And they have plenty of suggestions for how to raise revenues to meet their respective budget shortfalls.

Many are calling for a financial transaction tax that would slow down hot money and raise new money for social programs and climate change. Others are calling for steep taxes on polluters that would underwrite the cost of dealing with the effects of climate change and moving away from fossil fuels. And ending losing wars is always a good cost-saver.

The G20 is an ad hoc institution with none of the legitimacy of the United Nations. Since it just tried to stick us with a huge bill for a crisis most of us had no hand in creating, I say we take a cue from Mr. Martin and Mr. Summers. Flip it over, and write on the back of the envelope: Return to sender.

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Naomi Klein is the author of *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*.

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James Carroll: A Nation Under Post-Traumatic Stress

A Nation Under Post-Traumatic Stress

by James Carroll [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 28, 2010 | The Boston Globe | CommonDreams

It belongs to every citizen to have in mind what the nation's present wars are doing — not only to US troops, Iraqis and Afghans, and the faceless enemy, but to the American character. We have come to understand that the brutalities of combat can shatter participants psychologically as well as physically.

A psycho-medical diagnosis — post-traumatic stress syndrome — has gained legitimacy for individuals, but what about whole societies? Can war's dire and lingering effects on war-waging nations be measured? Can the stories of war be told, that is, to include aftermath wounds to society that, while undiagnosed, are as related to civic responsibility for state violence as one veteran's recurring nightmare is to a morally ambiguous firefigt? The battle zones of Fallujah and Kandahar are far away, but how do their traumas stamp Philadelphia and Kansas City — this year and a decade from now?

The US Civil War did not end in 1865. Its unleashed spirit of total destruction went west, and over subsequent decades Blue and Gray veterans savaged the remnant native peoples. The Indian Wars built upon Antietam and Shiloh. World War I was only the beginning of industrialized nihilism, with the decadence of the 1920s and the global collapse of order during the 1930s Depression coming in train with the civilizational suicides of the Somme and Verdun. The extremities of World War II generated a pathological paranoia in the Soviet Union, and a debilitating American insecurity that spawned, on one side, cultural banality, and, on the other, a garrison state. After Vietnam, citizens of all stripes proved permanently unable to trust their government. That killed shared meaning. America's wars left moral wreckage in their wakes. The chop continues.

In describing what he calls "PTSD and the ruins of character," psychiatrist Jonathan Shay cites an official definition of the disorder as it affects individuals. The characteristics include "a hostile or mistrustful attitude toward the world; social withdrawal; feelings of emptiness or hopelessness; a chronic feeling of being 'on the edge,' as if constantly threatened; estrangement." The catastrophic experience of war, to put it most simply, can completely change the personality.

But it is impossible to read that catalogue of symptoms belonging to traumatized persons and not recognize notes of the contemporary public scene in the United States. Political discourse — "hostility, mistrust" — suffers from the same ruins of character. A general "social withdrawal" into the solipsism of, say, Twitter is matched in the blogosphere by infinite self-expression for its own sake. "Hopelessness" attached to economic dislocation goes even deeper than worries about mid-life job loss or the vocation stymied at graduation. There is no "emptiness" to compare with the loss of a feel for the purposefulness of work.

Always, television is a mirror, with ads for drugs displaying how "on the edge" we are, whether the presenting issue is sexual performance, staying asleep at night, or awake in the afternoon. The way to sell beer is to show young men aroused only by six-packs. Boy meets girl. Boy loses girl. Boy could care less because he has his Coors. If that's not "estrangement," what is?

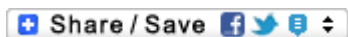
Not every manifestation of human finitude is a symptom. But we kid ourselves if we think we can be a people at war for a decade without suffering consequences precisely as a people. Mostly, prescriptions for American disorder cite public issues like health care, education, the environment, and the recession. Expressing disappointment in Barack Obama has become a universal therapy. In private, we might obsess about the retirement fund, the boss's recent coolness, a child's place in school, or the spouse's depression. Troubles aplenty, and plenty mundane.

But looming over all unease is the shadow of American wars that are, at best, hard to justify, difficult to understand, and steadily going, by every measurement, from bad to worse. The generals buckle. The president mystifies. Troops come home in bags or wheelchairs. Individual PTSD is back. An ever-growing population of far-off strangers equates America with Satan. The killers among them are empowered. And how could our quietly traumatized nation not be screaming, even if, at this point, the nation is still only screaming inside?

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Sunday, June 27, 2010

Andrew Gavin Marshall: The Global Political Awakening and the New World Order

The Global Political Awakening and the New World Order

The Technological Revolution and the Future of Freedom, Part 1

by Andrew Gavin Marshall [article link](#)

June 24, 2010 | Global Research

There is a new and unique development in human history that is taking place around the world; it is unprecedented in reach and volume, and it is also the greatest threat to all global power structures: the ‘global political awakening.’ The term was coined by Zbigniew Brzezinski, and refers to the fact that, as Brzezinski wrote:

For the first time in history almost all of humanity is politically activated, politically conscious and politically interactive. Global activism is generating a surge in the quest for cultural respect and economic opportunity in a world scarred by memories of colonial or imperial domination.[1]

It is, in essence, this massive ‘global political awakening’ which presents the gravest and greatest challenge to the organized powers of globalization and the global political economy: nation-states, multinational corporations and banks, central banks, international organizations, military, intelligence, media and academic institutions. The Transnational Capitalist Class (TCC), or ‘Superclass’ as David Rothkopf refers to them, are globalized like never before. For the first time in history, we have a truly global and heavily integrated elite. As elites have globalized their power, seeking to construct a ‘new world order’ of global governance and ultimately global government, they have simultaneously globalized populations.

The ‘Technological Revolution’ (or ‘Technetronic’ Revolution, as Brzezinski termed it in 1970) involves two major geopolitical developments. The first is that as technology advances, systems of mass communication rapidly accelerate, and the world’s people are able to engage in instant communication with one another and gain access to information from around the world. In it, lies the potential – and ultimately a central source – of a massive global political awakening.

Simultaneously, the Technological Revolution has allowed elites to redirect and control society in ways never before imagined, ultimately culminating in a global scientific dictatorship, as many have warned of since the early decades of the 20th century. The potential for controlling the masses has never been so great, as science unleashes the power of genetics, biometrics, surveillance, and new forms of modern eugenics; implemented by a scientific elite equipped with systems of psycho-social control (the use of psychology in controlling the masses).

What is the “Global Political Awakening”?

To answer this question, it is best to let Zbigniew Brzezinski speak for himself, since it is his term. In 2009, Zbigniew Brzezinski published an article based on a speech he delivered to the London-based Chatham House in their academic journal, International Affairs. Chatham House, formerly the Royal Institute of International Relations, is the British counterpart to the US-based Council on Foreign Relations, both of which were founded in 1921 as “Sister Institutes” to coordinate Anglo-American foreign policy. His article, “Major foreign policy challenges for the next US President,” aptly analyzes the major geopolitical challenges for the Obama administration in leading the global hegemonic state at this critical juncture. Brzezinski refers to the ‘global political awakening’ as “a truly transformative event on the global scene,” since:

For the first time in human history almost all of humanity is politically activated, politically conscious and politically interactive. There are only a few pockets of humanity left in the remotest corners of the world that are not politically alert and engaged with the political turmoil and stirrings that are so widespread today around the world. **The resulting global political activism is generating a surge in the quest for personal dignity, cultural respect and economic opportunity in a world painfully scarred by memories of centuries-long alien colonial or imperial domination.**[2]

Brzezinski posits that the ‘global political awakening’ is one of the most dramatic and significant developments in geopolitics that has ever occurred, and it “is apparent in radically different forms from Iraq to Indonesia, from Bolivia to Tibet.” As the Economist explained, “Though America has focused on its notion of what people want (democracy and the wealth created by free trade and open markets), Brzezinski points in a different direction: It’s about dignity.” Further, argues Brzezinski, “The worldwide yearning for human dignity is the central challenge inherent in the phenomenon of global political awakening.”[3]

In 2005, Brzezinski wrote an essay for The American Interest entitled, “The Dilemma of the Last Sovereign,” in which he explains the geopolitical landscape that America and the world find themselves in. He wrote that, “For most states, sovereignty now verges on being a legal fiction,” and he critically assessed the foreign policy objectives and rhetoric of the Bush administration. Brzezinski has been an ardent critic of the “war on terror” and the rhetoric inherent in it, namely that of the demonization of Islam and Muslim people, which constitute one of the fastest growing populations and the fastest growing religion in the world. Brzezinski fears the compound negative affects this can have on American foreign policy and the objectives and aspirations of global power. He writes:

America needs to face squarely a centrally important new global reality: that the world's population is experiencing a political awakening unprecedented in scope and intensity, with the result that **the politics of populism are transforming the politics of power**. The need to respond to that massive phenomenon poses to the uniquely sovereign America an historic dilemma: What should be the central definition of America's global role?[4]

Brzezinski explains that formulating a foreign policy based off of one single event – the September 11th terror attacks – has both legitimized illegal measures (torture, suspension of habeas corpus, etc) and has launched and pacified citizens to accepting the “global war on terror,” a war without end. The rhetoric and emotions central to this global foreign policy created a wave of patriotism and feelings of redemption and revenge. Thus, Brzezinski explains:

There was no need to be more precise as to who the terrorists actually were, where they came from, or what historical motives, religious passions or political grievances had focused their hatred on America. Terrorism thus replaced Soviet nuclear weapons as the principal threat, and terrorists (potentially omnipresent and generally identified as Muslims) replaced communists as the ubiquitous menace.[5]

Brzezinski explains that this foreign policy, which has inflamed anti-Americanism around the world, specifically in the Muslim world, which was the principle target population of ‘terrorist’ rhetoric, has in fact further inflamed the ‘global political awakening’. Brzezinski writes that:

[T]he central challenge of our time is posed not by global terrorism, but rather by the intensifying turbulence caused by the phenomenon of global political awakening. **That awakening is socially massive and politically radicalizing.**[6]

This ‘global political awakening’, Brzezinski writes, while unique in its global scope today, originates in the ideas and actions of the French Revolution, which was central in “transforming modern politics through the emergence of a socially powerful national consciousness.” Brzezinski explains the evolution of the ‘awakening’:

During the subsequent 216 years, political awakening has spread gradually but inexorably like an ink blot. Europe of 1848, and more generally the nationalist movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, reflected the new politics of populist passions and growing mass commitment. In some places that combination embraced utopian Manichaeism for which the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Fascist assumption of power in Italy in 1922, and the Nazi seizure of the German state in 1933 were the launch-pads. The political awakening also swept China, precipitating several decades of civil conflict. Anti-colonial sentiments galvanized India, where the tactic of passive resistance effectively disarmed imperial domination, and after World War II anti-colonial political stirrings elsewhere ended the remaining European empires. In the western hemisphere, Mexico experienced the first inklings of populist activism already in the 1860s, leading eventually to the Mexican Revolution of the early 20th century.[7]

Ultimately, what this implies is that – regardless of the final results of past awakenings – what is central to the concept of a ‘political awakening’ is the population – the people – taking on a political and social consciousness and subsequently, partaking in massive political and social action aimed at generating a major shift and change, or revolution, in the political, social and economic realms. Thus, no social transformation presents a greater or more direct challenge to entrenched and centralized power structures – whether they are political, social or economic in nature. Brzezinski goes on to explain the evolution of the ‘global political awakening’ in modern times:

It is no overstatement to assert that now in the 21st century **the population of much of the developing world is politically stirring and in many places seething with unrest. It is a population acutely conscious of social injustice to an unprecedented degree, and often resentful of its perceived lack of political dignity.** The nearly universal access to radio, television and increasingly the Internet is creating a community of shared perceptions and envy that can be galvanized and channeled by demagogic political or religious passions. **These energies transcend sovereign borders and pose a challenge both to existing states as well as to the existing global hierarchy, on top of which America still perches.**[8]

Brzezinski explains that several central areas of the ‘global political awakening’, such as China, India, Egypt, Bolivia, the Muslims in the Middle East, North Africa, Southeast Asia and increasingly in Europe, as well as Indians in Latin America, “increasingly are defining what they desire in reaction to what they perceive to be the hostile impact on them of the outside world. In differing ways and degrees of intensity they dislike the status quo, and many of them are susceptible to being mobilized against the external power that they both envy and perceive as self-interestedly preoccupied with that status quo.” Brzezinski elaborates on the specific group most affected by this awakening:

The youth of the Third World are particularly restless and resentful. **The demographic revolution they embody is thus a political time-bomb, as well.** With the exception of Europe, Japan and America, **the rapidly expanding demographic bulge in the 25-year-old-and-under age bracket is creating a huge mass of impatient young people.** Their minds have been stirred by sounds and images that emanate from afar and which intensify their disaffection with what is at hand. Their potential revolutionary spearhead is likely to emerge from among the scores of millions of students concentrated in the often intellectually dubious "tertiary level" educational institutions of developing countries. Depending on the definition of the tertiary educational level, there are currently worldwide between 80 and 130 million "college" students. **Typically originating from the socially insecure lower middle class and inflamed by a sense of social outrage, these millions of students are revolutionaries-in-waiting, already semi-mobilized in large congregations, connected by the Internet and pre-positioned for a replay on a larger scale of what transpired years earlier in Mexico City or in Tiananmen Square.** Their physical energy and emotional frustration is just waiting to be triggered by a cause, or a faith, or a hatred.[9]

Brzezinski thus posits that to address this new global “challenge” to entrenched powers, particularly nation-states that cannot sufficiently address the increasingly non-pliant populations and populist demands, what is required, is “increasingly supranational cooperation, actively promoted by the United States.” In other words, Brzezinski favours an increased and expanded ‘internationalization’, not surprising considering he laid the intellectual foundations of the Trilateral Commission. He explains that “Democracy per se is not an enduring solution,” as it could be overtaken by “radically resentful populism.” This is truly a new global reality:

Politically awakened mankind craves political dignity, which democracy can enhance, but political dignity also encompasses ethnic or national self-determination, religious self-definition, and human and social rights, all in a world now acutely aware of economic, racial and ethnic inequities. The quest for political dignity, especially through national self-determination and social transformation, is part of the pulse of self-assertion by the world's underprivileged.[10]

Thus, writes Brzezinski, “An effective response can only come from a self-confident America genuinely committed to a new vision of global solidarity.” The idea is that to address the grievances caused by globalization and global power structures, the world and America must expand and institutionalize the process of globalization, not simply in the economic sphere, but in the social and political as well. It is a flawed logic, to say the least, that the answer to this problem is to enhance and strengthen the systemic problems. One cannot put out a fire by adding fuel.

Brzezinski even wrote that, “Let it be said right away that supranationality should not be confused with world government. Even if it were desirable, mankind is not remotely ready for world government, and the American people certainly do not want it.” Instead, Brzezinski argues, America must be central in constructing a system of global governance, “in shaping a world that is defined less by the fiction of state sovereignty and more by the reality of expanding and politically regulated interdependence.”[11] In other words, not ‘global government’ but ‘global governance’, which is simply a rhetorical ploy, as ‘global governance’ – no matter how overlapping, sporadic and desultory it presents itself, is in fact a key step and necessary transition in the moves toward an actual global government.

Thus, the rhetoric and reality of a “global war on terror” in actuality further inflames the ‘global political awakening’ as opposed to challenging and addressing the issue. In 2007, Brzezinski told the US Senate that the “War on terror” was a “mythical historical narrative,”[12] or in other words, a complete fiction.

Of Power and People

To properly understand the ‘global political awakening’ it is imperative to understand and analyze the power structures that it most gravely threatens. Why is Brzezinski speaking so vociferously on this subject? From what perspective does he approach this issue?

Global power structures are most often represented by nation-states, of which there are over 200 in the world, and the vast majority are overlooking increasingly politically awakened populations who are more shaped by transnational communications and realities (such as poverty, inequality, war, empire, etc.) than by national issues. Among nation-states, the most dominant are the western powers, particularly the United States, which sits atop the global hierarchy of nations as the global hegemon (empire). American foreign policy was provided with the imperial impetus by an inter-locking network of international think tanks, which bring together the top political, banking, industrial, academic, media, military and intelligence figures to formulate coordinated policies.

The most notable of these institutions that socialize elites across national borders and provide the rationale and impetus for empire are an inter-locking network of international think tanks. In 1921, British and American elite academics got together with major international banking interests to form two “sister institutes” called the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) in London, now known as Chatham House, and the Council on Foreign Relations in the United States. Subsequent related think tanks were created in Canada, such as the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, now known as the Canadian International Council (CIC), and other affiliated think tanks in South Africa, India, Australia, and more recently in the European Union with the formation of the European Council on Foreign Relations.[13]

Following World War I, these powers sought to reshape the world order in their designs, with Woodrow Wilson proclaiming a right to “national self determination” which shaped the formation of nation-states throughout the Middle East, which until the war was dominated by the Ottoman Empire. Thus, proclaiming a right to “self-determination” for people everywhere became, in fact, a means of constructing nation-state power structures which the western nations became not only instrumental in building, but in exerting hegemony over. To control people, one must construct institutions of control. Nations like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Kuwait, etc., did not exist prior to World War I.

Elites have always sought to control populations and individuals for their own power desires. It does not matter whether the political system is that of fascism, communism, socialism or democracy: elites seek power and control and are inherent in each system of governance. In 1928, Edward Bernays, nephew of the father of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud, wrote one of his most influential works entitled “Propaganda.” Bernays also wrote the book on “Public Relations,” and is known as the “father of public relations,” and few outside of that area know of Bernays; however, his effect on elites and social control has been profound and wide-ranging.

Bernays led the propaganda effort behind the 1954 CIA coup in Guatemala, framing it as a “liberation from Communism” when in fact it was the imposition of a decades-long dictatorship to protect the interests of the United Fruit Company, who had hired Bernays to manage the media campaign against the democratic socialist government of Guatemala. Bernays also found a fan and student in Josef Goebbels, Hitler’s Minister of Propaganda, who took many of his ideas from Bernays’ writings. Among one of Bernays’ more infamous projects was the popularizing of smoking for American women, as he

hired beautiful women to walk up and down Madison Avenue while smoking cigarettes, giving women the idea that smoking is synonymous with beauty.

In his 1928 book, “Propaganda,” Bernays wrote that, “If we understand the mechanisms and motives of the group mind, it is now possible to control and regiment the masses according to our will without their knowing it.” Further:

The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society... Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. . . . In almost every act of our daily lives, whether in the sphere of politics or business, in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, **we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons . . . who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires which control the public mind.**[14]

Following World War II, America became the global hegemon, whose imperial impetus was provided by the strategic concept of “containment” in containing the spread of Communism. Thus, America’s imperial adventures in Korea, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and South America became defined by the desire to “roll back” the influence of the Soviet Union and Communism. It was, not surprisingly, the Council on Foreign Relations that originated the idea of “containment” as a central feature of foreign policy.[15]

Further, following World War II, America was handed the responsibility for overseeing and managing the international monetary system and global political economy through the creation of institutions and agreements such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), NATO, the UN, and GATT (later to become the World Trade Organization – WTO). One central power institution that was significant in establishing consensus among Western elites and providing a forum for expanding global western hegemony was the Bilderberg Group, founded in 1954 as an international think tank.[16]

Zbigniew Brzezinski, an up-and-coming academic, joined the Council on Foreign Relations in the early 1960s. In 1970, Brzezinski, who had attended a few Bilderberg meetings, wrote a book entitled, “Between Two Ages: America’s Role in the Technetronic Era,” in which he analyzed the impact of the ‘Revolution in Technology and Electronics,’ thus, the ‘technetronic era.’ Brzezinski defines the ‘technetronic society’ as, “a society that is shaped culturally, psychologically, socially, and economically by the impact of technology and electronics – particularly in the arena of computers and communications. The industrial process is no longer the principal determinant of social change, altering the mores, the social structure, and the values of society.”[17]

Brzezinski, expanding upon notions of social control, such as those propagated by Edward Bernays, wrote that, “Human conduct, some argue, can be predetermined and subjected to deliberate control,” and he quoted an “experimenter in intelligence control” who asserted that, “I foresee the time when we shall have the means and therefore, inevitably, the temptation to manipulate the behaviour and intellectual functioning of all the people through environmental and biochemical manipulation of the brain.”[18]

Brzezinski, in a telling exposé of his astute powers of observation and ability to identify major global trends, wrote that we are “witnessing the emergence of transnational elites” who are “composed of international businessmen, scholars, professional men, and public officials. The ties of these new elites cut across national boundaries, their perspectives are not confined by national traditions, and their interests are more functional than national.” Further, writes Brzezinski, “it is likely that before long the social elites of most of the more advanced countries will be highly internationalist or globalist in spirit and outlook.” However, warns Brzezinski, this increasing internationalization of elites “could create a dangerous gap between them and the politically activated masses, whose ‘nativism’ – exploited by more nationalist political leaders – could work against the ‘cosmopolitan’ elites.”[19] Brzezinski also wrote about “the gradual appearance of a more controlled and directed society,” in the “technetronic revolution;” explaining:

Such a society would be dominated by an elite whose claim to political power would rest on allegedly superior scientific know-how. Unhindered by the restraints of traditional liberal values, this elite would not hesitate to achieve its political ends by using the latest modern techniques for influencing public behavior and keeping society under close

surveillance and control. Under such circumstances, the scientific and technological momentum of the country would not be reversed but would actually feed on the situation it exploits.[20]

Further, writes Brzezinski, **“Persisting social crisis, the emergence of a charismatic personality, and the exploitation of mass media to obtain public confidence would be the steppingstones in the piecemeal transformation of the United States into a highly controlled society.”** Elaborating, Brzezinski writes, “The traditionally democratic American society could, because of its fascination with technical efficiency, become an extremely controlled society, and its humane and individualistic qualities would thereby be lost.”[21]

In his book, Brzezinski called for a “Community of the Developed Nations,” consisting of Western Europe, North America and Japan, to coordinate and integrate in order to shape a ‘new world order’ built upon ideas of global governance under the direction of these transnational elites. In 1972, Brzezinski and his friend, David Rockefeller, presented the idea to the annual Bilderberg meetings. Rockefeller was, at that time, Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations and was CEO of Chase Manhattan Bank. In 1973, Brzezinski and Rockefeller created the Trilateral Commission, a sort of sister institute to the Bilderberg Group, with much cross-over membership, bringing Japan into the western sphere of economic and political integration.[22]

In 1975, the Trilateral Commission published a Task Force Report entitled, “The Crisis of Democracy,” of which one of the principal authors was Samuel Huntington, a political scientist and close associate and friend of Zbigniew Brzezinski. In this report, Huntington argues that the 1960s saw a surge in democracy in America, with an upswing in citizen participation, often “in the form of marches, demonstrations, protest movements, and ‘cause’ organizations.”[23] Further, “the 1960s also saw a reassertion of the primacy of equality as a goal in social, economic, and political life.”[24] Huntington analyzed how as part of this “democratic surge,” statistics showed that throughout the 1960s and into the early 1970s, there was a dramatic increase in the percentage of people who felt the United States was spending too much on defense (from 18% in 1960 to 52% in 1969, largely due to the Vietnam War).[25] In other words, people were becoming politically aware of empire and exploitation.

Huntington wrote that the “essence of the democratic surge of the 1960s was a general challenge to existing systems of authority, public and private,” and that, “People no longer felt the same compulsion to obey those whom they had previously considered superior to themselves in age, rank, status, expertise, character, or talents.” Huntington explained that in the 1960s, “hierarchy, expertise, and wealth” had come “under heavy attack.”[26] He stated that three key issues which were central to the increased political participation in the 1960s were:

social issues, such as use of drugs, civil liberties, and the role of women; racial issues, involving integration, busing, government aid to minority groups, and urban riots; military issues, involving primarily, of course, the war in Vietnam but also the draft, military spending, military aid programs, and the role of the military-industrial complex more generally.[27]

Huntington presented these issues, essentially, as the “crisis of democracy,” in that they increased distrust with the government and authority, that they led to social and ideological polarization, and led to a “Decline in the authority, status, influence, and effectiveness of the presidency.”[28]

Huntington concluded that many problems of governance in the United States stem from an “*excess of democracy*,” and that, “the effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy and noninvolvement on the part of some individuals and groups.” Huntington explained that society has always had “marginal groups” which do not participate in politics, and while acknowledging that the existence of “marginality on the part of some groups is inherently undemocratic,” it has also “enabled democracy to function effectively.” Huntington identifies “the blacks” as one such group that had become politically active, posing a “danger of overloading the political system with demands.”[29]

Huntington, in his conclusion, stated that the vulnerability of democracy, essentially the ‘crisis of democracy,’ comes from “a highly educated, mobilized, and participant society,” and that what is needed is “a more balanced existence” in which there are “desirable limits to the indefinite extension of political democracy.”[30] Summed up, the Trilateral Commission Task Force Report essentially explained that the “Crisis of Democracy” is that there is too much of it, and so the ‘solution’ to the ‘crisis’ is to have less democracy and more ‘authority.’

The New World Order

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, American ideologues – politicians and academics – began discussing the idea of the emergence of a “new world order” in which power in the world is centralized with one power – the United States, and laid the basis for an expansion of elitist ideology pertaining to the notion of ‘globalization’: that power and power structures should be globalized. In short, the ‘new world order’ was to be a global order of global governance. In the short term, it was to be led by the United States, which must be the central and primary actor in constructing a new world order, and ultimately a global government.[31]

Anne-Marie Slaughter, currently the Director of Policy Planning for the US State Department, is a prominent academic within the American elite establishment, having long served in various posts at the State Department, elite universities and on the board of the Council on Foreign Relations. In 1997, Slaughter wrote an article for the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations, “Foreign Affairs,” in which she discussed the theoretical foundations of the ‘new world order.’ In it, she wrote that, “The state is not disappearing, it is disaggregating into its separate, functionally distinct parts. These parts—courts, regulatory agencies, executives, and even legislatures—are networking with their counterparts abroad, creating a dense web of relations that constitutes a new, transgovernmental order,” and that, “transgovernmentalism is rapidly becoming the most widespread and effective mode of international governance.”[32]

Long preceding Slaughter’s analysis of the ‘new world order,’ Richard N. Gardner published an article in Foreign Affairs titled, “The Hard Road to World Order.” Gardner, a former American Ambassador and member of the Trilateral Commission, wrote that, “The quest for a world structure that secures peace, advances human rights and provides the conditions for economic progress—for what is loosely called world order—has never seemed more frustrating but at the same time strangely hopeful.”[33]

Gardner wrote, “If instant world government, [UN] Charter review, and a greatly strengthened International Court do not provide the answers, what hope for progress is there? The answer will not satisfy those who seek simple solutions to complex problems, but it comes down essentially to this: The hope for the foreseeable future lies, not in building up a few ambitious central institutions of universal membership and general jurisdiction as was envisaged at the end of the last war, but rather in the much more decentralized, disorderly and pragmatic process of inventing or adapting institutions of limited jurisdiction and selected membership to deal with specific problems on a case-by-case basis, as the necessity for cooperation is perceived by the relevant nations.”[34]

He then stated, “In short, **the "house of world order" will have to be built from the bottom up rather than from the top down.** It will look like a great "booming, buzzing confusion," to use William James' famous description of reality, but **an end run around national sovereignty, eroding it piece by piece, will accomplish much more than the old-fashioned frontal assault.**”[35]

In 1992, Strobe Talbott wrote an article for Time Magazine entitled, “The Birth of the Global Nation.” Talbott worked as a journalist for Time Magazine for 21 years, and has been a fellow of the Yale Corporation, a trustee of the Hotchkiss School and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a director of the Council on Foreign Relations, the North American Executive Committee of the Trilateral Commission, and the American Association of Rhodes Scholars, and a member of the participating faculty of the World Economic Forum. Talbott served as Deputy Secretary of State from 1994 to 2001 in the Clinton administration and currently sits as President of the Brookings Institution, one of the premier American think tanks. In his 1992 article, “within the next hundred years,” Talbott wrote, “nationhood as we know it will be obsolete; all states will recognize a single, global authority.” He explained:

All countries are basically social arrangements, accommodations to changing circumstances. **No matter how permanent and even sacred they may seem at any one time, in fact they are all artificial and temporary.** Through the ages, there has been an overall trend toward larger units claiming sovereignty and, paradoxically, a gradual diminution of how much true sovereignty any one country actually has.[36]

Further, he wrote that, “**it has taken the events in our own wondrous and terrible century to clinch the case for world government.** With the advent of electricity, radio and air travel, the planet has become smaller than ever, its commercial life freer, its nations more interdependent and its conflicts bloodier.”[37]

David Rothkopf, a scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, former Deputy Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade in the Clinton administration, former managing director of Kissinger and Associates, and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, recently wrote a book titled, “Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World They are Making.” As a member of that “superclass,” his writing should provide a necessary insight into the construction of this “New World Order.” He states that, “In a world of global movements and threats that don’t present their passports at national borders, it is no longer possible for a nation-state acting alone to fulfill its portion of the social contract.” He wrote that, “progress will continue to be made,” however, it will be challenging, because it “undercuts many national and local power structures and cultural concepts that have foundations deep in the bedrock of human civilization, namely the notion of sovereignty.” He further wrote that, “Mechanisms of global governance are more achievable in today’s environment,” and that these mechanisms “are often creative with temporary solutions to urgent problems that cannot wait for the world to embrace a bigger and more controversial idea like real global government.”[38]

In December of 2008, the Financial Times published an article titled, “And Now for A World Government,” in which the author, former Bilderberg attendee, Gideon Rachman, wrote that, “for the first time in my life, I think the formation of some sort of world government is plausible,” and that, “A ‘world government’ would involve much more than co-operation between nations. It would be an entity with state-like characteristics, backed by a body of laws. The European Union has already set up a continental government for 27 countries, which could be a model. The EU has a supreme court, a currency, thousands of pages of law, a large civil service and the ability to deploy military force.”[39]

He stated that, “it is increasingly clear that the most difficult issues facing national governments are international in nature: there is global warming, a global financial crisis and a ‘global war on terror’.” He wrote that the European model could “go global” and that a world government “could be done,” as “The financial crisis and climate change are pushing national governments towards global solutions, even in countries such as China and the US that are traditionally fierce guardians of national sovereignty.” He quoted an adviser to French President Nicolas Sarkozy as saying, “Global governance is just a euphemism for global government,” and that the “core of the international financial crisis is that we have global financial markets and no global rule of law.” However, Rachman states that any push towards a global government “will be a painful, slow process.” He then states that a key problem in this push can be explained with an example from the EU, which “has suffered a series of humiliating defeats in referendums, when plans for ‘ever closer union’ have been referred to the voters. In general, the Union has progressed fastest when far-reaching deals have been agreed by technocrats and politicians – and then pushed through without direct reference to the voters. **International governance tends to be effective, only when it is anti-democratic.**”[40]

The Global Political Awakening and the Global Economic Crisis

In the face of the global economic crisis, the process that has led to the global political awakening is rapidly expanding, as the social, political and economic inequalities and disparities that led to the awakening are all being exacerbated and expanded. Thus, the global political awakening itself is entering into a period in which it will undergo rapid, expansionary and global transformation.

This ‘global political awakening’, of which Brzezinski has explained as being one of the primary global geopolitical challenges of today, has largely, up until recent times, been exemplified in the ‘Global South’, or the ‘Third World’ developing nations of the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America. Developments in recent decades and years in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Iran exemplify the nationalist-orientation of much of this awakening, taking place in a world increasingly and incrementally moving towards global governance and global institutions.

In 1998, Hugo Chavez became President of Venezuela, having campaigned on promises of aiding the nation’s poor majority. In 2002, an American coup attempt took place in Venezuela, but Chavez retained his power and was further emboldened by the attempt, and gained a great burst of popular support among the people. Chavez has undertaken what he refers to as a process of “Bolivarian socialism”, and has taken a decidedly and vehemently anti-American posture in Latin

America, long considered America's "back yard." Suddenly, there is virulent rhetoric and contempt against the United States and its influence in the region, which itself is backed by the enormous oil-wealth of Venezuela.

In Bolivia, Evo Morales was elected President in 2005 of the poorest nation in South America, and he was also the first indigenous leader of that country to ever hold that position of power, after having long been dominated by the Spanish-descended landed aristocracy. Evo Morales rose to power on the wave of various social movements within Bolivia, key among them being the "water wars" which took place in Cochabamba, Bolivia's third largest city, in 2000. The water wars were instigated after the World Bank forced Bolivia to privatize its water so that American and European companies could come in and purchase the rights to Bolivia's water, meaning that people in the poorest nation in South America could not even drink rain water without paying American or European companies for the 'right' to use it. Thus, revolt arose and Evo Morales rose with it. Now, Morales and Chavez represent the "new Left" in Latin America, and with it, growing sentiments of anti-American imperialism.

In Iran, itself defined more by nationalism than ethnic polarities, has become a principal target of the western hegemonic world order, as it sits atop massive gas and oil reserves, and is virulently anti-American and firmly opposed to western hegemony in the Middle East. However, with increased American rhetoric against Iran, its regime and political elites are further emboldened and politically strengthened among its people, the majority of whom are poor.

Global socio-political economic conditions directly relate to the expansion and emergence of the 'global political awakening'. As of 1998, "3 billion people live on less than \$2 per day while 1.3 billion get by on less than \$1 per day. Seventy percent of those living on less than \$1 per day are women." [41] In 2003, a World Bank report revealed that, "A minority of the world's population (17%) consume most of the world's resources (80%), leaving almost 5 billion people to live on the remaining 20%. As a result, billions of people are living without the very basic necessities of life - food, water, housing and sanitation." [42]

In regards to poverty and hunger statistics, "Over 840 million people in the world are malnourished—799 million of them are from the developing world. Sadly, more than 153 million of them are under the age of 5 (half the entire US population)." Further, "Every day, 34,000 children under five die of hunger or other hunger-related diseases. This results in 6 million deaths a year." That amounts to a "Hunger Holocaust" that takes place every single year. As of 2003, "Of 6.2 billion living today, 1.2 billion live on less than \$1 per day. Nearly 3 billion people live on less than \$2 a day." [43]

In 2006, a groundbreaking and comprehensive report released by the World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER) reported that, "The richest 2% of adults in the world own more than half of global household wealth." An incredibly startling statistic was that:

[T]he richest 1% of adults alone owned 40% of global assets in the year 2000, and that the richest 10% of adults accounted for 85% of the world total. In contrast, the bottom half of the world adult population owned barely 1% of global wealth. [44]

This is worth repeating: the top 1% owns 40% of global assets; the top 10% owns 85% of world assets; and the bottom 50% owns 1% of global assets; a sobering figure, indeed. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) report stated that in 2009, "an estimated 55 million to 90 million more people will be living in extreme poverty than anticipated before the crisis." Further, "the encouraging trend in the eradication of hunger since the early 1990s was reversed in 2008, largely due to higher food prices." Hunger in developing regions has risen to 17% in 2008, and "children bear the brunt of the burden." [45]

In April of 2009, a major global charity, Oxfam, reported that **a couple trillion dollars given to bail out banks could have been enough "to end global extreme poverty for 50 years."** [46] In September of 2009, Oxfam reported that the economic crisis "is forcing 100 people-a-minute into poverty." Oxfam stated that, "Developing countries across the globe are struggling to respond to the global recession that continues to slash incomes, destroy jobs and has helped push the total number of hungry people in the world above 1 billion." [47]

The financial crisis has hit the ‘developing’ world much harder than the western developed nations of the world. The UN reported in March of 2009 that, “Reduced growth in 2009 will cost the 390 million people in sub-Saharan Africa living in extreme poverty around \$18 billion, or \$46 per person,” and “This projected loss represents 20 per cent of the per capita income of Africa’s poor – a figure that dwarfs the losses sustained in the developed world.”[48]

Thus, the majority of the world’s people live in absolute poverty and social dislocation. This is directly the result of the globalized world order that has been and is being constructed. Now, as that same infrastructure is being further institutionalized and built upon, people are being thrown into the ‘awakening’ like never before. Their very poverty pushes them into an awakening. There is a seemingly lost notion of judging a society by how it treats its weakest members: the poor. Poverty forces one to look at the world differently, as they see the harsh restraints that society has imposed upon the human spirit. Life simply cannot be about the struggle to make payments week-to-week; to afford water, shelter, and food; to live according to the dictates of money and power.

Look to history, and you see that from some of the most oppressive societies can come the greatest of humanity. Russia, a nation which has never in its history experienced true political freedom for the individual, has managed to produce some of the greatest music, art, expression and literature as a vibrant outcry of humanity from a society so overcome with the need to control it. The fact that such triumphs of human spirit can come from such tyrannies over human nature is a sobering display of the great mystery of human beings. Why waste humanity by subjecting it to poverty? Think of the difference that could be made if all of humanity was allowed to flourish individually and collectively; think of all the ideas, art, expression, intellect and beauty we aren’t getting from those who have no voice.

Until we address this fundamental issue, any notion of humanity as being ‘civilized’ is but a cynical joke. If it’s human civilization, we haven’t quite figured it out yet. We don’t yet have a proper definition of ‘civilized’, and we need to make it ‘humane’.

The West and the Awakening

The middle classes of the western world are undergoing a dramatic transition, most especially in the wake of the global economic crisis. In the previous decades, the middle class has become a debt-based class, whose consumption was based almost entirely on debt, and so their ability to consume and be the social bedrock of the capitalist system is but a mere fiction. Never in history has the middle class, and most especially the youth who are graduating college into the hardest job market in decades, been in such peril.[49]

The global debt crisis, which is beginning in Greece, and spreading throughout the euro-zone economies of Spain, Portugal, Ireland and ultimately the entire EU, will further consume the UK, Japan and go all the way to America.[50] This will be a truly global debt crisis. Government measures to address the issue of debt focus on the implementation of ‘fiscal austerity measures’ to reduce the debt burdens and make interest payments on their debts.

‘Fiscal austerity’ is a vague term that in actuality refers to cutting social spending and increasing taxes. The effect this has is that the public sector is devastated, as all assets are privatized, public workers are fired en masse, unemployment becomes rampant, health and education disappear, taxes rise dramatically, and currencies are devalued to make all assets cheaper for international corporations and banks to buy up, while internally causing inflation – dramatically increasing the costs of fuel and food. In short, ‘fiscal austerity’ implies ‘social destruction’ as the social foundations of nations and peoples are pulled out from under them. States then become despotic and oppress the people, who naturally revolt against ‘austerity’: the sterilization of society.

‘Fiscal austerity’ swept the developing world through the 1980s and 1990s in response to the 1980s debt crisis which consumed Latin America, Africa, and areas of Asia. The result of the fiscal austerity measures imposed upon nations by the World Bank and IMF was the social dismantling of the new societies and their subsequent enslavement to the international creditors of the IMF, World Bank, and western corporations and banks. It was an era of economic imperialism, and the IMF was a central tool of this imperial project.

As the debt crisis we see unfolding today sweeps the world, the IMF is again stepping in to impose ‘fiscal austerity’ on nations in return for short-term loans for countries to pay off the interest on their exorbitant debts, themselves owed mostly to major European and American banks. Western nations have agreed to impose fiscal austerity,[51] which will in fact only inflame the crisis, deepen the depression and destroy the social foundations of the west so that we are left only with the authoritarian apparatus of state power – the police, military, homeland ‘security’ apparatus – which is employed against people to protect the status quo powers.

The IMF has also come to the global economic crisis with a new agenda, giving out loans in its own synthetic currency – Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) – an international reserve basket of currencies. The G20 in April of 2009 granted the IMF the authority to begin phasing in the applications of issuing SDRs, and for the IMF to in effect become a global central bank issuing a global currency.[52] So through this global debt crisis, SDRs will be disbursed globally – both efficiently and in abundance – as nations will need major capital inflows and loans to pay off interest payments, or in the event of a default. This will happen at a pace so rapid that it would never be conceivable if not for a global economic crisis. The same took place in the 1980s, as the nature of “Structural Adjustment Programs” (SAPs) could not be properly assessed as detrimental to economic conditions and ultimately socially devastating, for countries needed money fast (as the debt crisis spread across the developing world) and were not in a position to negotiate. Today, this will be the ‘globalization’ of the debt crisis of the 1980s, on a much larger and more devastating scale, and the reaction will be equally globalized and devastating: the continued implementation of ‘global governance’.

As austerity hits the west, the middle class will vanish in obscurity, as they will be absorbed into the lower, labour-oriented working class.[53] The youth of the western middle class, comprising the majority of the educated youth, will be exposed to a ‘poverty of expectations’ in which they grew up in a world in which they were promised everything, and from whom everything was so quickly taken. The inevitability of protests, riots and possible rebellion is as sure as the sun rises.[54]

In the United States, the emergence of the Tea Party movement is representative of – in large part – a growing dissatisfaction with the government and the economy. Naturally, like any group, it has its radical and fringe elements, which tend to draw the majority of media attention in an effort to shape public opinion, but the core and the driving force of the movement is the notion of popular dissatisfaction with government. Whatever one thinks of the legitimacy of such protestations, people are not pleased, and people are taking to the streets. And so it begins.

Even intellectuals of the left have spoken publicly warning people not to simply and so easily discount the Tea Party movement as fringe or radical. One such individual, Noam Chomsky, while speaking at a University in April of 2010, warned that he felt fascism was coming to America, and he explained that, “Ridiculing the tea party shenanigans is a serious error,” as their attitudes “are understandable.” He explained, “For over 30 years, real incomes have stagnated or declined. This is in large part the consequence of the decision in the 1970s to financialize the economy.” This constitutes ‘class resentment’, as “The bankers, who are primarily responsible for the crisis, are now reveling in record bonuses while official unemployment is around 10 percent and unemployment in the manufacturing sector is at Depression-era levels.” This same financial industry is directly linked to Obama, who is supporting their interests, and people are noticing.[55]

Another notable feminist intellectual of the left, Naomi Wolf, who wrote a book during the Bush administration on the emergence of fascism in America, and much of her message is being picked up by the Tea Party movement, as those on the right who were listening and agreeing with Wolf during the Bush administration (a considerable minority), then provided the impetus for the emergence of the Tea Party movement and many of its core or original ideas. In an interview in March 2010, Wolf explained that her ideas are even more relevant under Obama than Bush. She explained, “Bush legalized torture, but Obama is legalizing impunity. He promised to roll stuff back, but he is institutionalizing these things forever. It is terrifying and the left doesn’t seem to recognize it.” She explained how the left, while active under Bush, has been tranquilized under Obama, and that there is a potential for true intellectuals and for people more generally and more importantly, to reach out to each other across the spectrum. She explained:

I was invited by the Ron Paul supporters to their rally in Washington last summer and I loved it. I met a lot of people I respected, a lot of “ordinary” people, as in not privileged. They were stepping up to the plate, when my own liberal privileged fellow demographic habituates were lying around whining. It was a wake-up call to the libertarians that there’s a

progressive who cares so much about the same issues. Their views of liberals are just as distorted as ours are of conservatives.[56]

In regards to the Tea Party movement, Wolf had this to say: “The Tea Party is not monolithic. There is a battle between people who care about liberty and the Constitution and the Republican Establishment who is trying to take ownership of it and redirect it for its own purposes.” Further, she explained that the Tea Party is “ahead of their time” on certain issues, “I used to think “End the Fed people” were crackpots. The media paints them as deranged. But it turned out we had good reason to have more oversight.”[57]

In time, others will join with the Tea Party movement and new activist groups, the anti-war movement will have to revitalize itself or die away; since Obama became President their influence, their voice, and their dignity has all but vanished. They have become a pacified voice, and their silence is complicity; thus, the anti-war movement must reignite and reinvigorate or it will decompose. The ‘Left’s’ distrust of corporations must merge with the ‘Right’s’ distrust of government to create a trust in ‘people’. Soon students will be joining protests, and the issues of the Tea Party movement and others like it can become more refined and informed.

When the middle classes of the west are plunged into poverty, it will force an awakening, for when people have nothing, they have nothing left to lose. The only way that the entrenched powers of the world have been able to expand their power and maintain their power is with the ignorant consent of the populations of the west. Issues of war, empire, economics and terror shape public opinion and allow social planners to redirect and reconstitute society. The people of the west have allowed themselves to be ruled as such and have allowed our rulers to be so ruthless in our names. People have been blinded by consumerism and entertainment. Images of celebrities, professional sports, Hollywood, iPods, blackberrys, and PCs consume the minds of people, and especially the youth of the west today. It has been the illusion of being the consuming class that has allowed our societies to be run so recklessly. So long as we have our TVs and PCs we won’t pay attention to anything else!

When the ability to consume is removed, the people will enter into a period of a great awakening. This will give rise to major new political movements, many progressive but some regressive, some fringe and radical, some violent and tyrannical, but altogether new and ultimately global. This is when the people of the west will come to realize the plight of the rest. This will be the era in which people begin to understand the realization that there is great truth in Dr. Martin Luther King’s words, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Thus, the struggle of Africans will become the struggle of Americans: it must be freedom for all or freedom for none.

This is the major geopolitical reality and the pre-eminent global threat to world power structures. No development in all of human history presents such a monumental challenge to the status quo. As global power structures have never resembled such a monumental threat to mankind, mankind has never posed such an immense threat to institutionalized power. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Even if elites **think** that they truly do run the world, human nature has a way of exposing the flaws in that assumption. Human nature is not meant to be ‘controlled,’ but rather is meant to be nurtured.

A View From the Top

Again, it is important to go to Brzezinski’s own words in describing this new geopolitical reality, as it provides great insight into not only how the ‘global political awakening’ is defined; but more importantly, how it is perceived by those who hold power. In 2004, Brzezinski gave a speech at the Carnegie Council on his 2004 book, “The Choice”. The Carnegie Council is an elite think tank based in the United States, so Brzezinski is speaking to those who are potentially negatively affected by such an awakening. Brzezinski stated that America’s foreign policy in the wake of 9/11 – the “War on Terror” – is presenting a major challenge to American hegemony, as it is increasingly isolating the United States and damaging the nation’s credibility, as well as hiding the issues in virulent rhetoric which only further inflames the real and true challenge: the global political awakening. He states:

The misdiagnosis [of foreign policy] pertains to a relatively vague, excessively abstract, highly emotional, semi-theological definition of the chief menace that we face today in the world, and the consequent slighting of what I view as **the unprecedented global challenge arising out of the unique phenomenon of a truly massive global political awakening of mankind**. We live in an age in which mankind writ large is becoming politically conscious and politically activated to an unprecedented degree, **and it is this condition which is producing a great deal of international turmoil**.

But we are not focusing on that. We are focusing specifically on one word, which is being elevated into a specter, defined as an entity, presented as somehow unified but unrelated to any specific event or place—and that word is terrorism. The global challenge today on the basis of which we tend to operate politically is the definition of terrorism with a global reach as the principal challenge of our time.

I don't deny that terrorism is a reality, a threat to us, an ugly menace and a vicious manifestation. But it is **a symptom of something larger and more complicated**, related to the global turmoil that takes place in many parts of the world and manifests itself in different ways.

That turmoil is the product of the political awakening, the fact that today vast masses of the world are not politically neutered, as they have been throughout history. They have political consciousness. It may be undefined, it may point in different directions, it may be primitive, it may be intolerant, it may be hateful, but it is a form of political activism.[58]

Brzezinski explains that literacy has made for greater political awareness, while TV has made for immediate awareness of global disparities, and the Internet has provided instant communications. Further, says Brzezinski, "Much of this is also spurred by America's impact on the world," or in other words, American economic, political, and cultural imperialism; and further, "Much of it is also fueled by globalization, which the United States propounds, favors and projects by virtue of being a globally outward-thrusting society." Brzezinski warns, "But that also contributes to instability, and **is beginning to create something altogether new: namely, some new ideological or doctrinal challenge which might fill the void created by the disappearance of communism**." Brzezinski explains that Communism emerged in the last century as an alternative, however, today:

it is now totally discredited, and we have a pragmatic vacuum in the world today regarding doctrines. **But I see the beginnings, in writings and stirrings, of the making of a doctrine which combines anti-Americanism with anti-globalization, and the two could become a powerful force in a world that is very unequal and turbulent.**[59]

A question following Brzezinski's speech asked him to expand upon how to address the notion of and deal with the 'global political awakening'. Brzezinski explained that, "We deal with the world as it is and we are as we are. If we are to use our power intelligently and if we are to move in the right direction, we have no choice but do it incrementally." [60] In other words, as Brzezinski has detailed his vision of a solution to world problems in creating the conditions for global governance; they must do it "incrementally," for that is how to "use [their] power intelligently." The solution to the 'global political awakening', in the view from the top, is to continue to create the apparatus of an oppressive global government.

On April 23, 2010, Zbigniew Brzezinski went to the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations to give a speech at an event jointly-hosted by the Canadian International Council (CIC), the Canadian counterpart to the Council on Foreign Relations in the US and Chatham House in the U.K. These are many of the intellectual, social, political and economic elite of Canada. In his speech, Brzezinski gives a breakdown of the modern geopolitical realities:

Let me begin by making just a thumbnail definition of the geopolitical context in which we all find ourselves, including America. And in my perspective, that geopolitical context is very much defined by new – by two new global realities. The first is that global political leadership – by which I mean the role of certain leading powers in the world – has now become much more diversified unlike what it was until relatively recently. **Relatively recently still, the world was dominated by the Atlantic world, as it had been for many centuries. It no longer is. Today, the rise of the Far East has created a new but much more differentiated global leadership.** One which in a nutshell involves a wanton hazard, an arbitrary list of the primary players in the world scene: the United States, clearly; maybe next to it – but maybe – the European Union, I say maybe because it is not yet a political entity; certainly, increasingly so, and visibly so, China; Russia, mainly in one respect only because it is a nuclear power co-equal to the United States, but otherwise very deficient in all of the major

indices of what constitutes global power. Behind Russia, perhaps individually, but to a much lesser extent, Germany, France, Great Britain, Japan, certainly, although it does not have the political assertive posture; India is rising, and then in the background of that **we have the new entity of the G20, a much more diversified global leadership, lacking internal unity, with many of its members in bilateral antagonisms. That makes the context much more complicated.**

The other major change in international affairs is that for the first time, in all of human history, **mankind has been politically awakened. That is a total new reality – total new reality. It has not been so for most of human history until the last one hundred years.** And in the course of the last one hundred years, the whole world has become politically awakened. And no matter where you go, politics is a matter of social engagement, **and most people know what is generally going on –generally going on – in the world, and are consciously aware of global inequities, inequalities, lack of respect, exploitation. Mankind is now politically awakened and stirring.** The combination of the two: the diversified global leadership, politically awakened masses, makes a much more difficult context for any major power including, currently, the leading world power: the United States.[61]

Conclusion

So, **the Technological Revolution has led to a diametrically opposed, antagonistic, and conflicting geopolitical reality:** never before has humanity been so awakened to issues of power, exploitation, imperialism and domination; and simultaneously, never before have elites been so transnational and global in orientation, and with the ability to impose such a truly global system of scientific despotism and political oppression. These are the two major geopolitical realities of the world today. Reflect on that. Never in all of human history has mankind been so capable of achieving a true global political psycho-social awakening; nor has humanity ever been in such danger of being subjected to a truly global scientific totalitarianism, potentially more oppressive than any system known before, and without a doubt more technologically capable of imposing a permanent despotism upon humanity. So we are filled with hope, but driven by urgency. **In all of human history, never has the potential nor the repercussions of human actions and ideas ever been so monumental.**

Suddenly, global elites are faced with the reality of seeking to dominate populations that are increasingly becoming self-aware and are developing a global consciousness. Thus, a population being subjected to domination in Africa has the ability to become aware of a population being subjected to the same forms of domination in the Middle East, South America or Asia; and they can recognize that they are all being dominated by the same global power structures. That is a key point: **not only is the awakening global in its reach, but in its nature; it creates within the individual, an awareness of the global condition. So it is a ‘global awakening’ both in the external environment, and in the internal psychology.**

This new reality in the world, coupled with the fact that the world’s population has never been so vast, presents a challenge to elites seeking to dominate people all over the world who are aware and awakened to the realities of social inequality, war, poverty, exploitation, disrespect, imperialism and domination. **This directly implies that these populations will be significantly more challenging to control: economically, politically, socially, psychologically and spiritually.** Thus, from the point of view of the global oligarchy, the only method of imposing order and control – on this unique and historical human condition – is through the organized chaos of economic crises, war, and the rapid expansion and institutionalization of a global scientific dictatorship. Our hope is their fear; and our greatest fear is their only hope.

As Charles Dickens once wrote, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” That has never been so true as it is today.

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This has been Part 1 in the three-part series, “**The Technological Revolution and the Future of Freedom.**”

Part 2 will examine the nature of the global awakening in the ‘west’, particularly the United States, and the potential for revolution within that awakening; as well as the state systems of control and oppression being constructed to deal with it; notably, the construction of a Homeland Security State.

Part 3 will examine the evolution of the idea and reality of a scientific dictatorship, the technological revolution’s effect on power, and the emergence of new systems of social control based upon a modern implementation of eugenics.

Andrew Gavin Marshall is a Research Associate with the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), and is studying Political Economy and History in Canada. He is co-editor, with Michel Chossudovsky, of the recent book, "[The Global Economic Crisis: The Great Depression of the XXI Century](#)," available to order at Globalresearch.ca.

BOOK LAUNCH:

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Saturday, June 26, 2010

[Shirin Shafaie: Who Owns the World?](#)

Who Owns the World?

By Shirin Shafaie [article link](#)

June 25, 2010 | Information Clearing House

No one owns the world, yet we all do, along with other non-speaking species. This is a reality which has very real consequences. Each one of us has the potential to impact the lives of everyone else in this world for better or worse. After all, it is up to individuals to make all the final decisions and act upon them whether towards enhancing the quality of our lives or destructing it altogether. It takes individual human beings to make decisions, even though it may take some machines to act upon them. It takes one pilot to press the button and one man to fly an airplane into a skyscraper; even the unmanned military aircrafts do have some men remotely controlling them. But it is not as simple as that. Sometimes we make decisions based on good will but our achievements are used by others for wrong doing, for destruction and annihilation. We invent stuff or organisations to make our lives easier, we discover things to sustain our existence on this planet, yet the same technologies and institutions are used by some of us towards destruction. We build machines that are only good for extinction according to the same laws of physics that explain our survival. In a globalised time like ours, when the energies of our actions never die but transform into various consequences, we need to work together not against each other in order to make it work for all of us. We have to digest the mere reality that no one owns the world, but we all do.

Sadly, this is not the case. Some entities ranging from individuals, nation-states to some "international organisations" act as if they and only they own this world. They have come up with some "rules of the game" that they imagine will protect their security and wellbeing. They have proclaimed the roles of judge, prosecutor, jury, attorney (if at all) and basically every other legislative, juridical and executive authority that is applicable to the international "issues". They even decide when a situation becomes an issue or a problem or when the problem turns into a threat against peace and security in our world. These entities have emerged as winners of the Second World War, ironically including Germany to be more accurate. They

call themselves 5+1 and they think that they own the whole world or at least that's what we understand from their decisions and actions. But this is not how the reality works. Here arises a problem with real and catastrophic consequences.

In reality we live in a world where actions produce chained consequences and every mistake along the way bears more mistakes. The Second World War was wrong so were the decisions made on its basis: decisions that have real impacts on everyone's life regardless of the status of their participation in that tragic event. The Holocaust was one of the worst crimes that some human beings have ever committed against humanity, so is the killing and systematic suffering of the Palestinians and the loss of every single human life as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict regardless of their religion, nationality or race. The Cold War was wrong so is the mess that it has left behind: hundreds of nuclear warheads and their most recent generations and billions of dollars lost on the basis of protecting us from what some of us, ironically the same self-proclaimed protectors, have already built. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was wrong, so was the initial US support of Al-Qaeda which led to the deadly Taliban-Al-Qaeda coalition which itself led to 9/11 and the deadly and ongoing War on Terror. The US-backed Iraqi Act of Aggression against Iran in the 1980s which led to the death of over one million human beings was wrong so was the subsequent Iraqi invasion of Kuwait which led to the Second Persian Gulf War and the subsequent catastrophic sanctions against Iraq which led to the death of over 500,000 Iraqi people. The list of wrong decisions and wrongdoings goes on with the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq resulting in the killing of over one million Iraqis and 4,725 American military personnel. This is an open file with many more chapters, a sustainable system of destruction of human lives and resources.

I am not trying to play a blaming game here. But it seems that those of us who see themselves in a position to lead the world whether it is under the New World Order or under the banner of the United Nations Security Council are failing to understand that the world we live in belongs to all of us and that the decisions made for this world have to be made by all of us collectively and rationally. They fail to realise that this is the only way that we can sustain life on this planet. They seem to have failed to realise the scope of collateral damage done by their unilateral decisions. They fail to make the link and we all have to pay for it, so will our children, if we don't do something seriously and quickly to change the way in which our world is being governed by a few.

We need to put an end to the Orwellian logic of the United Nations Security Council; we need to envision the consequences of our actions before we make them; we need to stop producing means of destruction and destructing means of production; we need to realise that no one owns the world, but we all do. The sooner we realise this and the sooner we do something about it the sooner we will reverse this vicious chain of tragic consequences based on wrong decisions. We may still have a chance to protect our children from what we seem to be leaving them: destruction, death and more destruction.

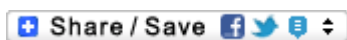
Now, how are we supposed to do all this? We could perhaps start from our own individual decisions and actions and refuse to be a link in the vicious chain of wrong decisions and catastrophic consequences that encircle us today. We may face a better tomorrow.

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Patrick Martin: Militarism and Democracy: the Implications of the McChrystal Affair

Militarism and Democracy: the Implications of the McChrystal Affair

by Patrick Martin [article link](#)

June 25, 2010 | Global Research | WSWS

The political crisis in Washington, sparked by the publication of inflammatory comments by General Stanley McChrystal, the overall commander of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, culminated in the firing of McChrystal Wednesday morning and his replacement by General David Petraeus, the former US commander in Iraq.

McChrystal was summoned from Afghanistan to a White House meeting where he submitted his resignation over the publication of a lengthy article in Rolling Stone magazine, in which he and his top aides were quoted making disparaging references to President Obama and nearly all the administration's top national security officials.

Obama accepted the resignation, and McChrystal left the White House immediately. After three hours of meetings with his national security council and Pentagon brass, Obama appeared before television cameras to announce McChrystal's ouster and the nomination of Petraeus to succeed him.

In his brief remarks, with no questions allowed from the media, Obama emphasized that he remained fully in support of the program of military escalation and counterinsurgency warfare with which McChrystal is identified. He pledged to do "whatever is necessary to succeed in Afghanistan," adding, "This is a change in personnel but it is not a change in policy."

General Petraeus, who was McChrystal's superior as head of the U.S. Central Command, was closely involved in the administration's Afghan policy deliberations and fully supported the decision last December to dispatch an additional 30,000 US troops.

Two aspects of the McChrystal affair deserve consideration. First, and most obviously, the firing of McChrystal demonstrates the worsening position of the US intervention in Afghanistan. The general would not have been summarily dismissed over a magazine article if the war had been going well.

The day McChrystal was fired, the death toll for US and NATO troops rose to 76 in June, making this the worst month for the foreign occupation forces since the US first invaded Afghanistan in October 2001. Among the Afghan people, President Hamid Karzai is widely reviled as a corrupt American puppet. Antiwar sentiment is mounting in all the European countries with military contingents in Afghanistan, as well as in the United States, where a majority in opinion polls now say the war is not worth fighting.

A report issued Monday by a congressional committee found that the supply chain for US troops in Afghanistan funnels hundreds of millions of dollars into the coffers of corrupt local warlords, many of whom in turn pay Taliban insurgents not to attack their trucks. The Pentagon is thus indirectly financing the insurgency, to the tune of \$2 million a week according to one estimate cited in the report.

On Tuesday evening, three of the most pro-war US senators, John McCain and Lindsey Graham, both Republicans, and Independent Democrat Joseph Lieberman, issued a joint statement condemning McChrystal's comments as "inappropriate and inconsistent with the traditional relationship between commander-in-chief and the military."

They effectively endorsed his dismissal in advance, declaring, "The decision concerning General McChrystal's future is a decision to be made by the president of the United States."

The backing for Obama from congressional Republicans and many right-wing media pundits shows that significant sections of the ruling elite have lost confidence in McChrystal and his counterinsurgency strategy. There was growing criticism for the past month, following the evident failure of the US intervention in Marjah and the forced postponement of the planned offensive into Kandahar, Afghanistan's second largest city and a Taliban stronghold.

Obama's selection of Petraeus to replace McChrystal is a clear effort to appease these right-wing critics. Petraeus directed the US military escalation in Iraq in 2007-2008, which is credited in ruling circles with salvaging the US intervention there, although some 90,000 US troops still remain. The appointment of Petraeus was suggested in advance by neoconservative columnist William Kristol, and hailed by the right-wing media as a political masterstroke.

The second key element in the McChrystal affair is what it has revealed about the internal state of affairs in the US military. An entire layer has developed in the officer corps and high command, which is openly contemptuous of civilian authority, while their nominal superiors are themselves thoroughly intimidated by military opposition.

The Army plays an ever-growing role in American political life, fueled by an endless succession of wars. The US military has been continuously engaged in combat operations for nearly nine years, the longest such period in American history, and the Pentagon operates under a "Long War" doctrine, which envisions a more or less indefinite continuation of such warfare.

A few of the more perceptive press commentators have pointed out this aspect of the McChrystal affair. Simon Tisdall, writing in the British Guardian, observed, "The disrespectful behaviour of the US commander in Afghanistan and his aides was symptomatic of a more deeply rooted, potentially dangerous malaise, analysts suggest. This week's events might thus be termed a very American coup."

Liberal Yale law professor Bruce Ackerman, writing in the Los Angeles Times about "An increasingly politicized military," argued that the McChrystal affair is more ominous than the celebrated Truman-MacArthur clash of 1951, which ended with MacArthur's dismissal in the midst of the Korean War. That is because McChrystal voices openly the sentiments an officer corps that has become, through a political selection over the past three decades, overwhelmingly oriented to the right-wing of the Republican Party and to Christian fundamentalism.

Ackerman cites surveys showing that "a majority of active-duty officers believe that senior officers should 'insist' on making civilian officers accept their viewpoints" and that "only 29% believe that high-ranking civilians, rather than their military counterparts, 'should have the final say on what type of military force to use'."

The ominous implications of this trend were expressed in two reports published today in the New York Times. An article by correspondent C.J. Chivers describes growing frustration among field officers, NCOs and rank-and-file soldiers in Afghanistan with McChrystal's counterinsurgency tactics, which, in the name of reducing civilian casualties, call for "further tightening rules guiding the use of Western firepower—airstrikes and guided rocket attacks, artillery barrages and even mortar fire—to support troops on the ground."

Chivers claims the rules "have shifted risks from Afghan civilians to Western combatants," leading to widespread resentment among the troops over "being handcuffed" in the fight against the Taliban and other insurgents. His unstated conclusion is that the replacement of McChrystal should be welcomed as a step to unleashing the full power of American weaponry on the Afghan population.

A commentary by correspondent Robert Mackey, published on the Times web site, takes note of the Chivers article and poses the question, "Is a Culture War Between American Soldiers and Civilians Inevitable?" Mackey points to the growing gulf between the American population and an all-volunteer military, much of its leadership recruited from the families that have provided several generations of military officers.

McChrystal himself, he notes, was the son of a major general who served in the US occupation government in Germany after World War II and later at the Pentagon. All five of McChrystal's siblings either joined the military or married into it.

What such commentaries begin to reveal is the emergence in the United States of a distinct military caste, virulently hostile to democracy, civilian control and any form of popular opposition to American imperialism.

The firing of McChrystal and his replacement by Petraeus represents, not a blow against this trend, but the means by which Obama and the Democratic Party adapt themselves to the demands of the military brass. McChrystal's only crime—his “error in judgment”, in Obama's parlance—was to express in too blunt and unguarded a fashion the sentiments of broad sections of the US officer corps.

Patrick Martin is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

Why was General McChrystal fired?

by Barry Grey [article link](#)

June 25, 2010 | Global Research | WSWS

Reactions within the US establishment to the firing of Gen. Stanley McChrystal indicate that disparaging remarks by McChrystal and his aides concerning President Obama and other civilian officials published in a Rolling Stone article were not the principal cause of his dismissal.

Rather, the article brought to a head the deepening crisis arising from the failure of the US military to suppress the popular resistance in Afghanistan to Washington's colonial-style war. Dissatisfaction with McChrystal's leadership had been mounting within the Obama administration since the failure of the offensive in Marjah launched last February. The decision announced earlier this month to delay for at least three months the assault on Kandahar was widely seen as an embarrassing setback.

Despite McChrystal's reputation as a ruthless practitioner of counterinsurgency warfare, responsible for the killing of thousands of Iraqis, the general has more recently been the target of growing criticism that the effectiveness of the operation in Afghanistan was being undermined by his excessive concern over civilian casualties.

That concern has nothing to do with humanitarian considerations. Rather, it is based on the cold calculation—the Rolling Stone article refers to McChrystal's "insurgent math"—that for every innocent person killed, ten new enemies are created.

The article, written by Michael Hastings, deals relatively briefly with the remarks of McChrystal and his aides about US civilian officials in Afghanistan. They are predictably crude, and could hardly have come as a surprise to Obama, let alone to the Pentagon. They are familiar with the fascistic and debased character of McChrystal's entourage. Hastings concisely describes the general's staff as “a handpicked collection of killers, spies, geniuses, patriots, political operators and outright maniacs.”

The comments made by McChrystal about Obama, Vice President Joseph Biden and special envoy Richard Holbrooke have generated the most media attention. But Hastings devotes far more space relating the complaints of American soldiers that McChrystal is tying their hands by enforcing rules of engagement which limit the use of air strikes and mortar fire against potential civilian targets and restrict the ability of US troops to enter the homes of Afghan civilians.

Hastings writes that “McChrystal has issued some of the strictest directives to avoid civilian casualties that the US military has ever encountered in a war zone.” He continues: “But however strategic they may be, McChrystal's new marching orders have caused an intense backlash among his own troops. Being told to hold their fire, soldiers complain, puts them in greater danger. ‘Bottom line?’ says a former Special Forces operator who has spent years in Iraq and Afghanistan, ‘I would love to kick McChrystal in the nuts. His rules of engagement put soldiers' lives in even greater danger. Every real soldier will tell you the same thing.’”

Describing a meeting near Kandahar between McChrystal and disaffected troops, Hastings writes: “The soldiers complain about not being allowed to use lethal force, about watching insurgents they detain be freed for lack of evidence. They want to fight—like they did in Iraq, like they had in Afghanistan before McChrystal.”

Whether this view is really widely held among soldiers is not clear. But it appears that this argument is gaining support within the Washington policy-making elite and within the media. Hastings indicates his own standpoint—and, more broadly, that of many of McChrystal's establishment critics—when he declares: “When it comes to Afghanistan, history is

not on McChrystal's side. The only foreign invader to have any success here was Genghis Khan—and he wasn't hampered by things like human rights, economic development and press scrutiny.”

The New York Times weighed in on Wednesday, before the White House meeting between Obama and McChrystal at which the general submitted his resignation, with an article by its Afghan war correspondent, C. J. Chivers, headlined “Warriors Vexed by Rules For War.”

The article makes the case for the US to “take the gloves off” and dramatically escalate its assault on the Afghan population. Chivers quotes unnamed soldiers denouncing McChrystal for limiting the use of air strikes and artillery, and declares: “As levels of violence in Afghanistan climb, there is a palpable and building sense of unease among troops surrounding one of the most confounding questions about how to wage the war: when and how lethal force should be used.”

He continues: “The rules have shifted risks from Afghan civilians to Western combatants... Young officers and enlisted soldiers and Marines...speak of ‘being handcuffed...’”

“No one wants to advocate loosening rules that might see more civilians killed,” he writes. But this is precisely what The New York Times is demanding.

In its lead editorial published on Thursday, entitled “Afghanistan After McChrystal,” the Times demands a “serious assessment now of the military and civilian strategies.” It then writes, in chilling language: “Until the insurgents are genuinely bloodied they will keep insisting on a full restoration of their repressive power. Reports that some State Department officials are also advocating a swift deal with the Taliban are worrisome.” [Emphasis added].

This statement, by the authoritative voice of the liberal Democratic Party policy-making establishment, provides an insight into the deeper issues involved in McChrystal's removal. Apparently, for the Times, the United States has not pursued with sufficient vigor the work of “seriously bloodying” those in Afghanistan opposed to foreign occupation during more than eight years of war.

Tens of thousands of Afghans have already been killed by US and NATO forces—nobody knows the full extent of the slaughter since Washington does not bother to count its victims. Tens of thousands more have been wounded, jailed or tortured in US prisons.

This campaign of killing and terror is aimed at drowning in blood an entirely legitimate struggle by the Afghan people for national liberation against a colonial occupier. The main problem the US faces is that after eight years of war and more than three decades of US subversion and provocation, popular resistance by the Afghan masses against American imperialism is growing. The answer of the US ruling elite is to murder more Afghans.

The war in Afghanistan is a crime against humanity, and those who are perpetuating it are war criminals.

The struggle to arouse opposition in the working class within the United States and internationally must be renewed.

Barry Grey is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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Did 9/11 Justify the War in Afghanistan?

Using the McChrystal Moment to Raise a Forbidden Question

by Prof. David Ray Griffin [article link](#)

June 25, 2010 | Global Research

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Firing McChrystal Isn't Enough. Fire the War

by Pierre Tristam [article link](#) [article link](#)

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Thank You General McChrystal

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Obama Misses the Afghan Exit Ramp

By Ray McGovern [article link](#)

June 24, 2010 | Information Clearing House

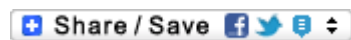
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McChrystal Scandal Shows Us the Military No Longer Protects America -- It Guards Empire

By Frank Schaeffer [article link](#)

June 25, 2010 | OpEdNews

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Paul Farrell: World War III: The 12-Bomb Equation

World War III: The 12-Bomb Equation, Exploding Population times Accelerating Demand minus Scarce Commodities equals New Resources Wars Everywhere!

Posted By Paul Farrell [article link](#)

06/26/2010 | Wall Street Warzone

So what's the biggest time-bomb for Obama, America, capitalism, the world? No, not global warming. Not poverty. Not even peak oil. What is the absolute biggest? One like the trigger mechanism on a nuclear bomb. One that'll throw a wrench in global economic growth, ending capitalism, even destroying modern civilization. The one that – if not solved soon – renders all efforts to solve all the other problems in the world, irrelevant, futile and virtually impossible. Yes, that one.

News flash: the “Billionaires Club” knows: Bill Gates called billionaire philanthropists to a super-secret meeting in Manhattan last May. Included: Buffett, Rockefeller, Soros, Bloomberg, Turner, Oprah and others meeting at the “home of Sir Paul Nurse, a British Nobel prize biochemist and president of the private Rockefeller University, in Manhattan,” reports John Harlow in the London TimesOnline. During an afternoon session each was “given 15 minutes to present their favourite cause. Over dinner they discussed how they might settle on an ‘umbrella cause’ that could harness their interests.”

The world's biggest time-bomb? Overpopulation say the billionaires. Too many people! Yes, over-population is the world's #1 problem. And yet, global governments with their \$50 trillion GDP, aren't even trying to solve the world's “over-population problem.” G-20 leaders ignore it. So by 2050 the Earth's population will explode by almost 50%, from 6.6 billion today to 9.3 billion says the UN. And what about those billionaires and their billions? Can they make stop the trend? Sadly no. Only a major crisis, a global catastrophe, a collapse beyond anything prior in world history will do it. Here's why.

Civilizations collapse fast, crises trigger, leaders clueless

“One of the disturbing facts of history is that so many civilizations collapse,” warns Jared Diamond, an environmental biologist, Pulitzer prizewinner and author of [Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed](#). Many “civilizations share

a sharp curve of decline. Indeed, a society's demise may begin only a decade or two after it reaches its peak population, wealth and power." Other voices are darker, shrill: "We're past the point of no return." "It's already too late." "The end is near." As with Rome's collapse, it happens fast. Clueless leaders are caught off-guard, like Greenspan, Bernanke and Paulson a couple years ago.

Call it "WWIII—the Population Wars." A few years ago Fortune analyzed a classified Pentagon report predicting that "climate could change radically and fast. That would be the mother of all national security issues" Population unrest would then create "massive droughts, turning farmland into dust bowls and forests to ashes." And "by 2020 there is little doubt that something drastic is happening ... an old pattern could emerge; warfare defining human life." War will be the end-game: For capitalism, civilization, earth?

Diamond's 12-part equation is very simple, fits perfectly with a global warfare scenario: "More people require more food, space, water, energy, and other resources ... There is a long built-in momentum to human population growth called the 'demographic bulge' with a disproportionate number of children and young reproductive-age people." And if the "bulge" stops for any reason, game over. Economic "growth" ends, killing capitalism.

So look closely: Diamond's equation has 12 time-bombs. But note, the first two are the biggest triggers in the formula. The other 10 are derivative variables driving what we call the "WWIII-Population Wars" equation. We've expanded on Diamond's source data.

One. "WWIII-Population Wars:" the "Over-Population Multiplier"

According to TimesOnline: A few months before the billionaires meeting Gates noted: "Official [UN] projections say the world's population will peak at 9.3 billion [up from 6.6 billion today] but with charitable initiatives, such as better reproductive healthcare, we think we can cap that at 8.3 billion." Still, that's 23% more than today's 6.6 billion.

Can it be stopped? In a recent special issue of Scientific American, population was called "the most overlooked and essential strategy for achieving long-term balance with the environment." Why? Population's the new "third-rail" for politicians. So they ignore it. Yet, if all nations consumed resources at the same rate as America, we'd need six Earths to survive. Unfortunately that scenario is unstoppable. Because by 2050, while America's population grows from 300 million to a mere 400 million, the rest of the world will explode from 6.3 billion to 8.9 billion, with over 1.4 billion each in China and India.

Two. "WWIII-Population Wars" equation: "Population Impact Multiplier"

Diamond warns: "There are 'optimists' who argue that the world could support double its human population." But he adds, they "consider only the increase in human numbers and not average increase in per-capita impact. But I have not heard anyone who seriously argues that the world could support 12 times it's current impact." And yet, that's exactly what happens with "all Third World inhabitants adopting First World standards." Folks, we oversold the "American Dream." Now everyone wants it. Not just 300 million Americans, but 6.3 billion people worldwide are demanding more, more, more!

"What really counts," says Diamond, "is not the number of people alone, but their impact on the environment," the "per-capita impact." First World citizens "consume 32 times more resources such as fossil fuels, and put out 32 times more waste, than do the inhabitants of the Third World." So the race is on: "Low impact people are becoming high-impact people" aspiring "to First World living standards." The American Dream is now the "Global Dream." Warning: The "Impact Multiplier" will drive the global "WWIII-Population Wars" equation even if there is zero population growth to 2050!

In Diamond's masterpiece, Collapse, the two key variables are what we call the "Over-Population Multiplier" and "Population Impact Multiplier." Now let's closely examine Diamond's other ten variables that are driving our "WWIII-Population Wars" equation:

1. Food. Two billion people, mostly poor, depend on fish and other wild foods for protein. They “have collapsed or are in steep decline” forcing use of more costly animal proteins. The UN calls the global food crisis a “silent tsunami.” Food prices rise making it worse for the 2.7 billion living below poverty levels on two dollars a day. In “The End of Plenty,” National Geographic warns that even a new “green revolution” of “synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and irrigation, supercharged by genetically engineered seeds” may fail. Why? A joint World Bank/UN study “concluded that the immense production increases brought about by science and technology the past 30 years have failed to improve food access for many of the world’s poor.” Meanwhile, a Time cover story warns that America’s “addiction to meat” has led to farming that’s “destructive of the soil, the environment and us.”

2. Water. Diamond warns: “Most of the world’s freshwater in rivers and lakes is already being used for irrigation, domestic and industrial water,” transportation, fisheries and recreation. Water problems destroyed many earlier civilizations: “Today over a million people lack access to reliable safe drinking water.” British International Development Minister recently warned that two-thirds of the world will live in water-stressed countries by 2015. Water will trade like oil futures as wars are fought over water and other basic essentials noted earlier in Fortune’s analysis of the Pentagon report predicting that warfare will define human life in this scenario of the near future.

3. Farmland. Crop soils are “being carried away by water and wind erosion at rates between 10 to 40 times the rates of soil formation,” much higher in forests where soil-erosion rate is “between 500 and 10,000 times” replacement rate. And this is increasing in today’s new age of the 100,000-acre mega-fires.

4. Forests. We are destroying natural habitats and rain forests at an accelerating rate. Half the world’s original forests have been converted to urban developments. A quarter of what remains will be converted in the next fifty years.

5. Toxic chemicals. Often our solutions create more problems than they solve. For example, industries “manufacture or release into the air, soil, oceans, lakes, and rivers many toxic chemicals” that break down slowly or not at all. Consider the deadly impact of insecticides, pesticides, herbicides, detergents, plastics ... the list is endless.

6. Energy resources. Oil, natural gas and coal. Pimco manages \$747 billion: equity, bonds and commodity funds. Manager Bill Gross recently described a “significant break” in the world’s “growth pattern.” He’s even betting we’re past the “peak oil” tipping point, heading down. Consumer shopping will continue declining as economies grow very slowly in the future and “corporate profits will be static.” In a recent issue of Foreign Policy Journal warns of the “7 Myths About Alternative Energy.” Are biofuels, solar and nuclear the “major ticket?” No, “they’re not,” never will be.

7. Solar energy. Sunlight’s not unlimited. Diamond: We’re already using “half of the Earth’s photosynthetic capacity” and we will reach the max by mid-century. In “Plundering the Amazon,” Bloomberg Markets magazine warned that Alcoa, Cargill and other companies “have bypassed laws designed to prevent destruction of the world’s largest rain forest ... robbing the earth of its best shield against global warming.” Free market capitalism may be the enemy of survival.

8. Ozone layer. “Human activities produce gases that escape into the atmosphere” where they can destroy the protective ozone or absorb and reduce solar energy.

9. Diversity. “A significant fraction of wild species, populations and genetic diversity has been lost, and at present rates, a large percent of the rest will disappear in half century.”

10. Alien species. Transferring species to lands where they’re not native can have unintended and catastrophic effects, “preying on, parasitizing, infecting or out-competing” native animals and plants that lack evolutionary resistance.

In spite of the clear message in Diamond’s 12 time-bombs, he still says he’s a “cautious optimist.” What fuels his hope? Our leaders need “the courage to practice long-term thinking, and to make bold, courageous, anticipatory decisions at a time when problems have become perceptible but before they reach crisis proportions.”

Unfortunately, history tells us that cautious leaders are myopic, driven more by self-interest and nationalism than courage and long-term thinking. Eventually they’re caught off-guard and their worlds collapse, fast. They only respond to crises.

And yes, out of crisis may come opportunity. And as Nobel economist Milton Friedman put it in his classic, *Capitalism and Freedom*: “Only a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change” because in the aftermath of crisis “the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable.” Too many, however, delay and respond to crises with too little, too late.

Bottom line: The betting odds are 100% that global leaders will wait for a Pentagon-style “black swan” crisis before acting. Unfortunately, that delay positions the “WWIII-the Population Wars” dead ahead. G-20 politicians will ignore the UN’s 9.3 billion population prediction. And Bill Gates well-intentioned 8.3 billion forecast also falls far short, by ignoring the “Population Impact Multiplier.” Wake up world, a global disaster is dead ahead: droughts, poverty, pandemics, global warming, wars everywhere. But is this a “Black Swan?” No. Why? Because this crisis is in fact 100% predictable using Diamond’s simple 12-timebomb equation. Failure to solve his equation quarantees triggering the “WWIII Population Wars.” Bet on the odds.

Wall Street Warzone [home page](#)

Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed [wikipedia](#)

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[Joyce Lee Malcolm: The Right of the People to Keep and Bear Arms](#)

The Right of the People to Keep and Bear Arms: The Common Law Tradition

By Joyce Lee Malcolm [article link](#) [article link](#)

Introduction []**

Every generation suffers to some degree from historic amnesia. However, when the history of a major political tradition, along with the assumptions and passions that forged it, are forgotten, it becomes extraordinarily difficult to understand or evaluate its legacy. This is particularly unfortunate when that legacy has been written into the enduring fabric of government. The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution is such a relic, a fossil of a lost tradition. Even a century ago its purpose would have been clearly appreciated. To nineteenth century exponents of limited government, the checks and balances that preserved individual liberty were ultimately guaranteed by the right of the people to be armed. The preeminent Whig historian, Thomas Macaulay, labelled this "the security without which every other is insufficient," [1] and a century earlier the great jurist, William Blackstone, regarded private arms as the means by which a people might vindicate their other rights if these were suppressed. [2] Earlier generations of political philosophers clearly had less confidence in written constitutions, no matter how wisely drafted. J.L. De Lolme, an eighteenth century author much read at the time of the American Revolution [3] pointed out:

But all those privileges of the People, considered in themselves, are but feeble defences against the real strength of those who govern. All those provisions, all those reciprocal Rights, necessarily suppose that things remain in their legal and settled course: what would then be the recourse of the People, if ever the Prince, suddenly freeing himself from all restraint, and throwing himself as it were out of the Constitution, should no longer respect either the person, or the property of the subject, and either should make no account of his conversation with the Parliament, or attempt to force it implicitly to submit to his will?--It would be resistance . . . the question has been decided in favour of this doctrine by the Laws of England, and that resistance is looked upon by them as the ultimate and lawful resource against the violences of Power. [4]

This belief in the virtues of an armed citizenry had a profound influence upon the development of the English, and in consequence the American, system of government. However, the many years in which both the British and American governments have remained "in their legal and settled course[s]," have helped bring us to the point where the history of the individual's right to keep and bear arms is now obscure. British historians, no longer interested in the issue, have tended to

ignore it, while American legal and constitutional scholars, ill-equipped to investigate the English origins of this troublesome liberty, have made a few cursory and imperfect attempts to research the subject. [5] As a result, Englishmen are uncertain of the circumstances surrounding the establishment of a right to bear arms and the Second Amendment to the Constitution remains this country's most hotly debated but least understood liberty.

In a report on the legal basis for firearms controls, a committee of the American Bar Association observed:

There is probably less agreement, more misinformation, and less understanding of the right of citizens to keep and bear arms than on any other current controversial constitutional issue. The crux of the controversy is the construction of the Second Amendment to the Constitution, which reads: "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." [6]

Few would disagree that the crux of this controversy is the construction of the Second Amendment, but, as those writing on the subject have demonstrated, that single sentence is capable of an extraordinary number of interpretations. [7] The main source of confusion has been the meaning and purpose of the initial clause. Was it a qualifying or an amplifying clause? That is, was the right to arms guaranteed only to members of "a well-regulated militia" or was the militia merely the most pressing reason for maintenance of an armed community? The meaning of "militia" itself is by no means clear. It has been argued that only a small, highly trained citizen army was intended, [8] and, alternatively, that all able-bodied men constituted the militia. [9] Finally, emphasis on the militia has been proffered as evidence that the right to arms was only a "collective right" to defend the state, not an individual right to defend oneself. [10] Our pressing need to understand the Second Amendment has served to define areas of disagreement but has brought us no closer to a consensus on its original meaning.

The fault lies not with the legal, but with the scholarly, community. For if the crux of the controversy is the construction of the Second Amendment, the key to that construction is the English tradition the colonists inherited, and the English Bill of Rights from which much of the American Bill of Rights was drawn. Experts in English constitutional and legal history have neglected this subject, however, with the result that no full-scale study of the evolution of the right to keep and bear arms has yet been published. Consequently, there is doubt about such elementary facts as the legality and availability of arms in seventeenth and eighteenth century England, and uncertainty about whether the English right to have arms extended to the entire Protestant population or only to the aristocracy. Experts in American constitutional theory have nevertheless endeavored to define the common law tradition behind the Second Amendment without the benefit of research into these basic questions. These experts' findings are contradictory, often involve serious mistakes of fact, and muddle, rather than clarify, matters. For example, in their report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, George Newton and Franklin Zimring insist that any traditional right of Englishmen to own weapons was "more nominal than real," [11] while the authors of *The Gun in America* conclude that few Englishmen ever owned firearms because prior to the adoption of the English Bill of Rights in 1689, firearms were expensive and inefficient, and thereafter guns were not considered "suitable to the condition" of the average citizen. [12] Neither set of authors provides more than cursory evidence. [13] On the other hand, one British author found that until modern times his countrymen's right to keep arms was "unimpaired as it was then [in 1689] deliberately settled" [14] and a second noted that with only "minor exceptions" the Englishman's "right to keep arms seems not to have been questioned." [15]

The continuing confusion is apparent in the articles that have appeared on this subject in American law journals. David Caplan, writing in the *North Carolina Central Law Journal*, finds that "the private keeping of arms was completely guaranteed by the common law as an 'absolute right of individuals,'" [16] while James Whisker argues in the *West Virginia Law Review* that long before the American Revolution "Englishmen came to view the retention of arms by individuals or by private groups as productive only of rebellion or insurrection." [17] There is a temptation to superimpose the debate over the Second Amendment's militia clause back onto the English guarantee of the right to have arms, although the English guarantee contained no such clause. Roy Weatherup, for example, interprets the clear English guarantee that "Protestant subjects may have arms for their defence" to mean "Protestant members of the militia might keep and bear arms in accordance with their militia duties for the defense of the realm." [18] Despite the fact that the Convention Parliament which drafted the English Bill of Rights purposely adopted the phrase "their defence" in preference to "their common defence" [19] he could find "no recognition of any personal right to bear arms." [20] In short, there is disagreement over who could, or did, own firearms both before and after passage of the English Bill of Rights.

Nearly all writers agree, however, that an accurate reading of the Second Amendment is indispensable to resolving current debates over gun ownership, and that a clarification of the common law tradition is necessary to that reading. [21] There are compelling reasons for this consensus. To begin with, the royal charters that created the new colonies assured potential emigrants that they and their children would "have and enjoye all Liberties and Immunities of free and naturall Subjects . . . as if they and every of them were borne within the Realme of England." [22] Furthermore, the entire body of common law, with the exception of those portions inappropriate to their new situation, crossed the Atlantic with the colonists. [23] The perilous circumstances of the infant colonies made the common law tradition of an armed citizenry both appropriate and crucial to the survival of the plantations. [24] Indeed, the colonies began very early requiring residents to keep firearms and establishing militias. [25]

There is a further reason for examining the Second Amendment in the light of English legal traditions. Not only did colonists arrive in the new land equipped with an elaborate legal framework, they were for the most part imbued with that attitude of antiauthoritarianism that had fueled the traumatic upheavals of the seventeenth century: the English Civil War of 1642, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. This general distrust of central power resulted in the English Bill of Rights in 1689 and was to produce the American Bill of Rights a century later. Bernard Bailyn, in *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, is emphatic about there being a connection between English opposition philosophy and American political thought:

To say simply that this tradition of opposition thought was quickly transmitted to America and widely appreciated there is to understate the fact. Opposition thought, in the form it acquired at the turn of the seventeenth century and in the early eighteenth century, was devoured by the colonists. . . . There seems never to have been a time after the Hanoverian succession when these writings were not central to American political expression or absent from polemical politics. [26]

When they had won their battle to retain the rights of Englishmen, and came to write the federal and state constitutions and draw up the federal Bill of Rights, American statesmen borrowed heavily from English models. [27] Since the federal Bill of Rights, including the Second Amendment, is to a very great extent an example of such borrowing, it behooves us to take a closer look at their English models.

I. The Traditional Obligation to be Armed [28]

During most of England's history, maintenance of an armed citizenry was neither merely permissive nor cosmetic but essential. Until late in the seventeenth century England had no standing army, and until the nineteenth century no regular police force. The maintenance of order was everyone's business and an armed and active citizenry was written into the system. All able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and sixty were liable to be summoned to serve on the sheriff's posse to pursue malefactors or to suppress local disorders. [29] For larger scale emergencies, such as invasion or insurrection, a civilian militia was intermittently mustered for military duty. [30] While all able-bodied males were liable for this service, the practice during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had been to select a group of men within each county to be intensively trained. [31] Whenever possible, members of these trained bands were supposed to be prosperous farmers and townsmen, but in practice, the rank-and-file were usually men of modest means--small freeholders, craftsmen, or tenant-farmers. [32] They were, however, invariably led by prestigious members of their community, and commanded by lords lieutenant, who were peers appointed by, and directly responsible to, the Crown. [33] The effectiveness of the militia varied with the need for their services, the interest of particular monarchs, and even with the enthusiasm of individual muster masters and captains. [34] During some reigns, the trained bands were scarcely mustered from one year to the next; in others they were drilled with regularity. In the 1630's, a major effort was made to re-equip these citizen-soldiers and have them instructed in the latest European military tactics. [35]

The militia and the posse were summoned only occasionally, but English subjects were frequently involved in everyday police work. The old common law custom persisted that when a crime occurred citizens were to raise a "hue and cry" to alert their neighbors, and were expected to pursue the criminals "from town to town, and from county to county." [36] Villagers who preferred not to get involved were subject to fine and imprisonment. [37] As an additional incentive to aid in crime prevention, local residents were expected to make good half the loss caused by robbers or rioters. [38]

The most frequent police duty was the keeping of watch and ward. Town gates were closed from sundown until sunrise and all householders, "sufficiently weaponed" according to the requirement, took turns standing watch at night or ward during that day. [39] Widows, disabled men, and other townsmen unable to carry out the task had to hire substitutes to serve in their stead. [40]

Citizens were not only expected to have suitable weapons at the ready for these duties, but, since passage of the Statute of Winchester in 1285, were assessed according to their wealth for a contribution of arms for the militia. [41] When not in use for musters or emergencies, nearly all of this equipment remained in private hands. A series of later statutes spelled out in detail the arms each household was required to own and the frequency of practice sessions. [42] During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, for example, every family was commanded to provide a bow and two shafts for each son between the ages of seven and seventeen and to train them in their use or be subject to a fine. [43] To promote proficiency in arms, Henry VIII and his successors ordered every village to maintain targets on its green at which local men were to practice shooting "in holy days and other times convenient." [44]

The obligation to own and be skilled in the use of weapons does not, of course, imply that there were no restrictions upon the type of weapon owned or the manner of its use. A statute passed in 1541, for instance, cited the problem of "evil-disposed" persons who daily rode the King's highway armed with crossbows and handguns--weapons easily concealed beneath a cloak--and preyed upon Henry VIII's good subjects. The new law limited ownership of such questionable weapons to persons with incomes over one hundred pounds a year--citizens presumably more trustworthy--whereas those with less income were not to carry a crossbow bent, or a gun charged "except it be in time and service of war." [45] This law, often misinterpreted as restricting all ownership of firearms to the upper classes, merely limited the use of those weapons most common in crime. Indeed, the statute specifically states that it is permissible not only for gentlemen, but for yeomen, servingmen, the inhabitants of cities, boroughs, market towns, and those living outside of towns "to have and keep in every of their houses any such hand-gun or hand-guns, of the length of one whole yard." [46] The use of shot was forbidden, as was the brandishing of a firearm so as to terrify others, and the use of guns in hunting by unqualified persons. [47] It is notable that in cases in which crossbows, handguns, or other weapons were confiscated because of improper use, the courts were at pains to specify that the weapon in question was "noe muskett or such as is used for defence of the realm." [48]

The kingdom's Catholics formed an important exception to the tolerant attitude toward individual ownership of weapons. After the English Reformation they were regarded as potential subversives, and as such were liable to have their arms impounded. They were still assessed for a contribution of weapons for the militia, but were not permitted to keep these in their homes or to serve in the trained bands. [49] They were allowed to keep personal weapons for their defense, although in times of extreme religious tension their homes might be searched and all weapons removed. [50] The various restrictions on Catholic subjects are significant for demonstrating that a particular group could be singled out for special arms controls, but they did not advantage a substantial proportion of the community, for, by the second half of the seventeenth century, Catholics seem to have comprised not more than one in fifty of the English population. [51]

For the great majority of Englishmen there was a natural tendency during tranquil years or in periods of government indifference to become blase about military duties; complaints of widespread negligence echo through the years. In 1569, a jury presented a grievance "that there is to much bowling and to little shoting," [52] and fifty years later, in the 1620's, Charles I had to resort to the closure of alehouses on Sundays to keep men at their shooting practice. [53] In 1621 Sir James Parrett complained of the lamentable decline in the numbers of armed retainers maintained by the wealthy. "Those gentlemen whose grandfathers kept 15 or 17 lusty serveing men and but one or 2 good silver boules to drinke in," he noted, had been succeeded by "grand-children fallen from Charity to impiety [who] keepe scarce 6 men and greate Cubards of plate to noe purpose." Worse still, Parrett reported that public complacency had reached the stage where "in two shyres [there was] not a barrell of Gunn-powder to bee seene." [54]

During the 1620's and 1630's there was a serious effort to modernize the militia, but the increased expenses and requirement of additional participation aroused popular resistance. Robert Ward, author of a military manual published just prior to the Civil War, was distressed at the failure of many bandsmen to appreciate how deeply every man is interested in it, for if they did, our yeomandrie would not be so proud and base to refuse to be taught, and to thinke it a shame to serve in

their own armes, and to understand the use of them; were they but sensible, that there is not the worth of the peny in a kingdome well secured without the due use of Armes. [55]

Two years later, with the commencement of frantic preparations for civil war and party struggles over public arsenals, the public's attitude had completely altered. Wails of despair were heard from city after city as the royal army confiscated public magazines and disarmed local residents. "The best of it is," a disarmed and distraught townsman of Nantwich wrote, "if we stay at home, we are now their slaves. Being naked they will have of us what they list, and do with us what they list." [56] Forewarned was forearmed, and from 1642 Englishmen learned to hide their firearms and to stockpile weapons.

Nearly twenty years later, this proliferation of privately owned weapons would be regarded by the restored monarch and his supporters as a menace. It was their efforts to control weapons that convinced Englishmen that the duty to keep arms must be recognized as a right. The events of the Restoration period, therefore, are of crucial importance.

II. Royal Efforts to Control Arms

To grasp the magnitude of the problem that awaited Charles II upon his return in 1660 it is useful to get some idea of the numbers of firearms kept in private homes. In ordinary times each household was expected to possess arms suitable to its defense, but what was considered suitable? It is possible to obtain an indication of what was regarded as a minimal arsenal by examining the responses of those charged by Charles II's government with stockpiling weapons. For example, in 1660, in reply to allegations that he had concealed weapons, one Robert Hope pleaded that in the past he had, indeed, kept guns for neighbors, but at present he had only "one light rapire and a small birdinge gunne." [57] Hope obviously considered this small stock beyond exception. In 1667, a Catholic subject informed an official that he was "not so well furnished with arms" as formerly, having only two fowling pieces and two swords. [58] Those not suspected of disaffection had, or at least admitted to having, comparatively more weapons. A Buckinghamshire squire kept for private use a pair of pocket pistols, another pair of "screwed" pistols, a suit of light armour, a sword, and a carbine. [59] A country curate in the early eighteenth century, unqualified to hunt and certainly no soldier, nonetheless owned two guns and a blunderbuss. [60] While wealthier citizens usually owned more weapons, firearms seem to have been well distributed throughout the community. [61] Quarter Session records reveal that men charged with illegal use of a gun for hunting were most often poor laborers, small farmers, or craftsmen. [62] This is not surprising, since guns abounded during and after the Civil War [63] and seem not to have been beyond the means of the poorer members of the community. In 1664 a musket could be purchased for ten shillings, a sum that would take only a little over a week for a foot soldier in a militia band to accumulate from his wages, and a little more than two weeks for a citizen to afford with the modest wages paid for standing night watch. [64] Used weapons could probably be bought even more cheaply.

The anxious period between Cromwell's death and the arrival of Charles II was no ordinary time, and many citizens began to assemble caches of weapons, some of which turned up years later in homes, churches, and guildhalls throughout the realm. [65] In 1660 a Bristol prebendary notified authorities that the stables of his predecessor's house were full of cannon balls and, even twenty years later, a Shropshire man and his son were found with a cache of some thirty muskets and other guns and admitted to having owned and burned fifty pikes. [66] City officials stockpiled weapons as well, and Northampton and Exeter were among those communities later embarrassed by the disclosure of stocks of arms hidden in public buildings. In 1661 the city of Exeter surrendered 937 musket barrels only to have another hoard of weapons discovered shortly afterwards in the guildhall. [67]

As his subjects and the republican army of some 60,000 men waited, "armed to the teeth," to greet their new monarch, Charles II found himself virtually unarmed. In the months before his arrival public arsenals had suffered such extensive embezzlements that the King's men were unable to find in them "firearms enough . . . to arm three thousand men." [68] The King was careful to conceal the fact "that it might not be known abroad or at home, in how ill a posture he was to defend himself against an enemy." [69]

It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that the wild rejoicing that greeted Charles II upon his return to London in May, 1660 [70] failed to disguise from the King the precariousness of his position. He was painfully aware that many of these same citizens had gathered for his father's execution eleven years earlier and that despite its obedient professions, Parliament had never been at "so high a pitch," for "the power which brought in may cast out, if the power and interest be not

removed." [71] A study sent to his Court recommended the removal of that power. The anonymous author argued that no prince could be safe "where Lords and Commons are capable of revolt," hence it was essential to disarm the populace and establish a professional army. "It is not the splendor of precious stones and gold, that makes Enemies submit," he observed, "but the force of armes. The strength of title, and the bare interest of possession will not now defend, the stress will not lye there, the sword is the thing." [72]

Charles agreed completely. But to achieve a shift in the balance of armed might from the general populace to reliable supporters, he needed an obedient police establishment and a series of legal or quasi-legal enactments that would permit the disarmament of his opponents, among whom he counted members of the republican army. [73] In this latter task he had help from Parliament, whose members had learned a lasting distrust of all armies at the hands of Cromwell's soldiers. Parliament speedily devised a scheme to pay off regiments by lot, taking care to secure their weapons "for his Majesty's service." [74] While Charles was relieved to have this particular army disbanded, he was anxious to launch a permanent establishment of his own, and shortly after his return to England secretly began to plan for a force of eight thousand men. A loophole in the disbandment bill permitted the King to maintain as many soldiers as he liked, provided he paid for their upkeep. [75]

The militia was a knottier problem. Both King and Parliament were eager to reestablish the old trained band system, but Parliament was reluctant to confront the numerous difficulties any militia act would have to resolve. A bill submitted at the time of the Restoration had been rejected because many representatives believed its provision for martial law might make Englishmen "wards of an army." [76] The struggle over control of the militia had driven the realm to war in 1642; [77] the issue of royal command would have to be clarified and a militia assessment set, which would involve an evaluation of every subject's property. Despite vigorous pressure from the Court, members of Parliament refused to approve even a temporary militia bill for more than a year. [78] The King, however, was unwilling to wait even a few days before establishing a militia, and was reported within ten days of his return to London to be "settling the militia in all counties by Lords Lieutenants." [79] His right to do so, even in the absence of a valid militia act, does not seem to have been questioned. All candidates for the post of lord lieutenant were carefully screened, and officers were instructed to select bandsmen of unblemished royalist complexion. [80] The resulting force should in no way be seen as representative of the people.

In conjunction with this purged and loyal militia, Charles created a new military body as large again as the militia for which there was far less precedent. It was composed of regiments of volunteers who met at their own, rather than the county's, expense and drilled alongside the regular militia. [81] Both the size of this private army and its longevity were impressive. It continued as an organized force well after the Militia Act of 1662 took effect, and at least through 1667, when the entire militia fell into decline. [82] Although the official task of the volunteers was "to assist on occasion," occasion occurred with great frequency, particularly when such controversial and unpopular duties as the disarmament of fellow subjects were involved. [83]

Charles II employed his militia and volunteer regiments differently from the manner in which militia had been used before the Civil War. In place of the occasional muster in time of peace and mobilization during an invasion or rebellion, his men were to be ready for action at an hour's warning. [84] Their main task was to police possible opponents of the regime. Their first order was to monitor the "motions" of persons of "suspected or knowne disaffection" and prevent their meeting or stockpiling weapons. [85] All arms and munitions in the possession of such suspects beyond what they might require for personal defense were to be confiscated. [86]

With this police apparatus in place, the King turned to the royal proclamation, a device of uncertain legal status, to tighten arms control. In September, 1660, he issued a proclamation forbidding footmen to wear swords or to carry other weapons in London. [87] In December another proclamation expressed alarm that many "formerly cashiered Officers and Soldiers, and other dissolute and disaffected persons do daily resort to this City." [88] All such soldiers and others "that cannot give a good Account for their being here" were to leave London within two days and remain at least twenty miles away indefinitely. [89] At the same time the royal government launched a campaign to control firearms at the source. Gunsmiths were ordered to produce a record of all weapons they had manufactured over the past six months together with a list of their purchasers. [90] In future they were commanded to report every Saturday night to the ordnance office the number of guns

made and sold that week. [91] Carriers throughout the kingdom were required to obtain a license if they wished to transport guns, and all importation of firearms was banned. [92]

Events then played into Charles's hands, for on January 6, 1661, an uprising by a handful of religious zealots provided the perfect excuse to crack down on all suspicious persons and to recruit his own standing army. Thomas Venner, a cooper, had led his small band of Fifth Monarchists into the streets of London to launch the prophesied fifth universal monarchy of the world. Although the group was soon subdued, [93] the Court administration blatantly exaggerated the threat they had posed. Speaking to Parliament six months later, the Lord Chancellor characterized the pitiful uprising as the "most desperate and prodigious Rebellion . . . that hath been heard of in any Age" and insisted the plot had "reached very far," and that "there hath not been a Week since that Time in which there hath not been Combinations and Conspiracies formed." [94]

The timing of the Fifth Monarchist uprising was especially opportune, for it occurred the very day the last regiments of the Commonwealth army were due to be disbanded. In response to this visible danger, these regiments were retained and twelve more companies were recruited to form the nucleus of a royalist army. [95] The militia and volunteers throughout the realm were ordered to carry out a general disarmament of everyone of doubtful loyalty. [96] By January 8, 1661, two days after the Venner uprising, Northamptonshire lieutenants reported that all men of known "evill Principles" had been disarmed and secured "so as we have not left them in any ways of power to attempt a breach of the peace." [97]

By the autumn of 1661, with his enemies in prison or at least disarmed and under surveillance, with strict monitoring of both production and distribution of weapons, and with a small standing army and a large police establishment, Charles was ready to disarm the most dangerous element of the population--the thousands of disbanded soldiers of the republican army. Acting by proclamation on November 28, he ordered all veterans of that army and all those who had ever fought against the Stuarts to depart from the capital within the week and to remain at least twenty miles away until June 24, 1662. [98] During their six months of banishment the veterans were warned not to "weare, use, or carry or ryde with any sword, pistoll or other armes or weapons." [99] Two days before this proclamation was due to expire, another appeared which extended the ban and the prohibition against carrying arms for an additional six months. [100] The scope of these bans was so broad it is doubtful whether the militia and volunteers were capable of enforcing them. Nevertheless, the proclamations had the practical effect of depriving a large portion of the male population of its legal right to carry firearms.

Endless alarms of plots provided an excuse to keep the militia on full alert, to impose restrictions on the production, importation, and movement of arms, and to create a standing royal army. Parliament cooperated in this policy by passing militia acts in 1661 and 1662 which reaffirmed the King's control of that force and specifically authorized bandsmen to continue the seizure of arms that Charles's militia had been undertaking on the King's orders alone. [101] Any two deputy lieutenants could initiate a search for, and seizure of, arms in the possession of any person whom they judged "dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom." [102] This definition of those who could be disarmed was less precise than that of any former militia act, and permitted lower ranking officers great latitude in disarming their neighbors.

Charles II's program to police his realm and control its arms demonstrated skill, timing, and resourcefulness. Arriving unarmed in 1660 to confront an armed nation and a veteran republican army, he succeeded within two years in molding the militia and volunteers into a police force of unprecedented size and effectiveness. All possible adversaries were watched, harassed, disarmed, and in many instances imprisoned. And the men of Oliver Cromwell's army, once the pride of England and terror of Europe, were flattened, disbanded, psychologically disarmed, and then actually deprived of their right to carry weapons. Many members of Parliament were skeptical about the need for such broad powers or the actual danger of rebellion [103] but were content to give the King what he wished as long as their own interests were protected.

III. Parliament's Campaign to Regulate Arms

The royalist aristocrats who flocked to welcome Charles II on his return had every reason to rejoice, for his restoration was theirs as well. After twenty years during which their prestige, pocketbooks, and property had been ravaged by war, revolution, and a republican government, they had an opportunity to restore, and even enhance, their former position. The royalists were to be so successful in this aim that their position by 1688 was described as like that of the barons of Henry III. [104] In order to restore order they were prepared to concede much to the Crown, but jealously guarded the power of

the sword and mastery of the localities. They administered local justice, staffed the militia, served in the royal volunteers, and sat in Parliament. [105] The King was dependent upon them to carry out his policies and shore up his regime. [106] For the sake of maintaining their political dominance they acquiesced in the King's program of arms control and, in the Militia Act of 1662, extended the power of militia officers to disarm suspects. [107] But the aristocracy went beyond approving the royal controls. On its own initiative, Parliament passed a game act in 1671 that, for the first time, deprived the vast majority of Englishmen of their legal right to keep weapons. [108]

Game acts had been passed from time to time and were ostensibly designed to protect wild game and to reserve the privilege of hunting for the wealthy. But disarming the rural population was sometimes an underlying motive for their passage. [109] Game acts of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries had made possession of certain breeds of dog and possession of equipment specifically designed for hunting illegal for all those not qualified by income to hunt. [110] However, since guns were acknowledged to have legitimate purposes, they were confiscated only if used illegally. [111]

The Game Act passed in 1671 differed from its predecessors in several important respects. To begin with, it raised the property qualification necessary to hunt from forty pounds to one hundred pounds annual income from land, a figure so high that only the nobility, gentry, and a very few yeomen could qualify, whereas all those whose wealth came from a source other than land--such as lawyers and merchants--were forbidden to hunt. [112] This extraordinarily high qualification divided the rural population into two very unequal groups and placed the aristocracy at odds with everyone else. Many critics would later express astonishment that "the legislature of a mighty empire should require one hundred [pounds] a year to shoot a poor partridge, and only forty shillings to vote for a senator!" [113] The qualification to hunt was fifty times that required to vote.

Of more importance, this game law stated that all persons unqualified to hunt, at least ninety-five percent of the population, were not qualified to keep or bear arms. In the language of the statute: "[A]ll and every person and persons, not having Lands and Tenements of the clear yearly value of One hundred pounds . . . are . . . not allowed to have or keep for themselves, or any other person or persons, any Guns, Bowes, . . . or other Engines." [114] It was no longer necessary to prove illegal use or intent; the mere possession of a firearm was illegal. The new act also empowered owners of forests and parks to appoint gamekeepers who, by warrant, could search the homes of persons suspected of harboring weapons, and confiscate any arms they found. [115]

There can be little doubt that it was the intention of the promoters of the Game Act to give themselves the power to disarm their tenants and neighbors and to bolster the position of their class with respect to that of the King and of the wealthy members of the middle class. They had begun to be suspicious of Charles II by 1671, and frightened by a spate of rural violence. [116] Hence, the provision of the Game Act that enabled country squires to set up their own gamekeeper-police and to confiscate the weapons of unqualified persons at their discretion must have seemed most desirable. As James II was to demonstrate, however, it was a statute with great potential for the Crown.

There appears to have been no overt protest or widespread alarm over the royalist program of arms control. While this may have been due to the conviction that such controls were necessary, it seems more likely that the real reason was that the program was not rigidly enforced during the reign of Charles II. It would have been difficult to carry out the proclamations against the carriage of arms by parliamentary veterans, and the militia's disarmament of suspicious persons was always selective. [117] The prosecution of the Game Act of 1671 was left to the gentry and from the scant evidence available appears to have been sporadic.

After 1680, however, Charles II began to use the Militia Act to disarm his Whig opponents, and in 1686, James II made use of both the Militia Act and the Game Act to disarm his Protestant subjects. [118] Englishmen were outraged and alarmed, and finally convinced of the need to guarantee their right to own weapons. After James II had fled from the kingdom, members of the Convention Parliament convened by William of Orange [119] felt it incumbent upon them to shore up the rights of English subjects before a new monarch ascended the throne. During their discussions, the need for Protestant subjects to have arms came up repeatedly. [120] When the many rights considered most in need of reaffirmation had been pared to thirteen, and a Declaration of Rights presented to William and Mary, the seventh among the "true, ancient, and indubitable" rights proclaimed was the right of all Protestants "to have Arms for their Defence suitable to their Conditions and as allowed by Law." [121]

IV. The English Bill of Rights and the Present Controversy

As an article of the English Bill of Rights, the right to have arms was part and parcel of that bundle of rights and privileges that English men carried with them to America and which they later fought to preserve. Much of the present confusion over the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution stems from the failure to understand the meaning or to determine the effect of the English right--problems that can both be finally solved by a careful reading of the historic record.

Roy Weatherup is one of several authors who fail in the attempt to fix the meaning of the English right by slipping into the common trap of imposing a modern controversy upon past events. [122] Weatherup is so caught up in the debate over the reference to the militia in the Second Amendment and the attendant quarrel over whether that amendment conveys a collective or an individual right [123] that he totally ignores the fact that the English right to arms makes no mention whatsoever of the militia. Undeterred, Weatherup insists that the English right conveyed "no recognition of any personal right to bear arms on the part of subjects generally" but merely granted members of the militia the right to "keep and bear arms in accordance with their militia duties." [124] Such an interpretation ignores the clear language of the English right and disregards the accompanying historic record. The militia was certainly of grave concern to members of the Convention Parliament, but this was not because members of the militia had been disarmed. Quite the contrary. The militia was a problem because the Militia Act of 1662 had permitted its officers wide latitude to disarm law-abiding citizens. The correction of this abuse and many others that preoccupied the members required new legislation which, they reluctantly admitted, in the present emergency they did not have the leisure to draft. [125] Instead, they decided to concentrate their energies upon reaffirming those ancient rights most recently imperiled through a declaration of rights they hoped would be "like a new magna charta." [126] Legislative reform was meant to follow when time allowed.

Weatherup is somewhat nearer the mark in his assertion that a collective right was intended. [127] A collective right to arms was discussed by the Convention, but it was rejected in favor of an individual right alone. The Whig members of the Convention had pressed hard for a collective as well as an individual right [128] and the first version of the arms article adhered to their view that the public should be armed to protect their rights:

It is necessary for the publick Safety, that the Subjects which are Protestants, should provide and keep Arms for their common Defence. And that the Arms which have been seized, and taken from them, be restored. [129]

The second version of this article retreated somewhat from this stance. It stated:

That the Subjects, which are Protestants, may provide and keep Arms, for their common Defence. [130]

All mention of arms being "necessary for the publick Safety" was omitted although this version still asserts that arms could be kept for "common" defense; instead of the exhortation that citizens "should" provide and keep arms, the permissive "may" is used.

It was the third, and final version, however, that constituted a complete retreat from any collective right to have arms. It read:

That the Subjects which are Protestants may have Arms for their Defence suitable to their Conditions, and as allowed by Law. [131]

The reference to a need for arms for "their common Defence" was replaced by the right to keep arms for "their Defence," and two modifying clauses were added at the last moment at the instigation of the cautious House of Lords.

In the opinion of a modern British scholar, the retreat from a collective to an exclusively individual right to have arms "emasculated" the article: "The original wording implied that everyone had a duty to be ready to appear in arms whenever the state was threatened. The revised wording suggested only that it was lawful to keep a blunderbuss to repel burglars." [132] The Whigs continued to press for the notion that it was necessary for the safety of the constitution that subjects be armed and, in the course of the eighteenth century, Blackstone among others reinterpreted the English right to arms to

include that position. [133] At the time it was drafted, however, the English right to have arms was solely an individual right. By the outbreak of the American Revolution, it had been transformed into both an individual and a collective right.

The actual impact of the English right as stated in the new Bill of Rights is far more difficult to determine than its meaning. Modern critics have argued that the limitation to Protestants of the right to have arms and the qualifying clauses further restricting lawful possession by Protestants to those weapons "suitable to their conditions" and "as allowed by Law" made this right so exclusive and uncertain as to be "more nominal than real." [134] But if, at first glance, the article's exclusiveness appears striking, much hinges on how these clauses, added at the last moment, were in fact interpreted. There is no doubt that "as allowed by law" included those sixteenth century laws which placed certain restrictions on the type of arms subjects could own, but did not deprive Protestant subjects of their right to have firearms. [135] However, the Game Act of 1671 was in direct conflict with that right. Since the Convention Parliament had agreed to restate rights but leave legislative reform for the future, [136] it is not surprising that the right to have arms contradicted laws still on the statute books. The best means of determining the extent to which the qualifying clauses limited ownership of firearms is to examine subsequent legislation and those legal cases that decided permissible use.

Early in the reign of William and Mary, Parliament approved two acts affecting arms ownership: "An Act for the better securing the Government by disarming Papists and reputed Papists" in 1689, [137] and, in 1692, "An Act for the more easie Discovery and Conviction of such as shall Destroy the Game of this Kingdom." [138] A militia act was also approved by the House of Commons in July 1689, but failed to pass the House of Lords. [139] The first of these acts, the act for disarming Catholics, was meant to secure the realm against a rising on behalf of the deposed Catholic king, James II. It prohibited Catholics from keeping all "Arms, Weapons, Gunpowder, or Ammunition," but did permit a Catholic to retain those weapons that local justices at Quarter Sessions thought necessary "for the Defence of his House or Person." [140] This exception is especially significant, as it demonstrates that even when there were fears of religious war, Catholic Englishmen were permitted the means to defend themselves and their households; they were merely forbidden to stockpile arms. The need for individual self-defense was conceded to have precedence over other considerations. Furthermore, while the Bill of Rights excluded Catholics from any absolute right to have arms, members of that faith were, in practice, accorded the privilege of retaining some weapons.

In 1692, Parliament passed a game statute designed to supercede all previous game acts. [141] This act incorporated many articles of the Game Act of 1671, but altered that act's ban on ownership of firearms by persons unqualified to hunt by omitting all mention of guns from the list of forbidden devices. Whereas the Game Act of 1671 stated that persons not qualified to hunt were "not allowed to have or keep for themselves, or any other person or persons, any Guns, Bowes, Greyhounds . . . or other Engines," [142] the new act prohibited such persons from keeping and using "any bows, greyhounds . . . or any other instruments for destruction of . . . game." [143] According to the rule of law of that era, a later statute expressed in terms contrary to those of a former statute takes away the force of the first statute even without express negative words. [144] Of course, it was possible that guns could be included among "other instruments for destruction of . . . game." All evidence, however, points to the intentional exclusion of firearms from the terms of the statute.

The House of Commons journals reveal the sensitivity of members to the new act's potential for disarming Englishmen. At the time of the bill's third reading, an engrossed clause, offered as a rider, stated that "any Protestant may keep a Musquet in his House, notwithstanding this or any other Act." [145] This was a very sweeping proposal, as it made no allowance for factors such as the sanity or previous criminality of the gun owner, and would, moreover, have purportedly bound future parliaments--something no session was really at liberty to do. [146] On the question of whether this rider should have a second reading, there was sufficient controversy to compel a division. The proposal lost by sixty-five votes to one hundred sixty-nine. [147] Despite its failure to become part of the new game act, it is of interest for two reasons: first, because it indicated the awareness of members that a game act could jeopardize the right of Protestants to have arms; second, because although it was an extreme proposal, it was not dismissed out of hand but occasioned a rare division in the House of Commons.

There is a frustrating lack of commentary or cases bearing on the issue of whether the omission of guns from the list of proscribed devices in the Game Act of 1692 should be regarded as legalizing their ownership, or whether firearms ought to be included under "any other engine." But the fact that there is no recorded instance of anyone charged under the new act

for mere possession of a firearm, coupled with decisions from cases under a later law with similar language, [148] lends weight to the conclusion that guns were meant to be excluded from the terms of the statute.

In reference to the successor to the Game Act of 1692, "An act for the better preservation of the game," passed in 1706, [149] Joseph Chitty, an expert on game law, notes: "We find that guns which were expressly mentioned in the former acts were purposely omitted in this because it might be attended with great inconvenience to render the mere possession of a gun prima facie evidence of its being kept for an unlawful purpose." [150] Two cases brought under that game act dealt specifically with the question of the inclusion of firearms under prohibited devices. Perhaps the most important of these was *Rex v. Gardner*, [151] in which the defendant had been convicted by a justice of the peace for keeping a gun in alleged violation of the Game Act. There was no evidence that the gun in question had been wrongfully used. But it was argued that a gun was mentioned in the 1671 Game Act [152] and considered there as an engine, and that the use of the general words "other engines" in the 1706 Act should be taken to include a gun. [153] It was objected "that a gun is not mentioned in the statute [of 1706], and though there may be many things for the bare keeping of which a man may be convicted, yet they are only such as can only be used for destruction of the game, whereas a gun is necessary for defence of a house, or for a farmer to shoot crows." [154]

The court concluded that "a gun differs from nets and dogs, which can only be kept for an ill purpose, and therefore this conviction must be quashed." [155] The justices reasoned:

[I]f the statute is to be construed so largely, as to extend to the bare having of any instrument, that may possibly be used in destroying game, it will be attended with very great inconvenience; there being scarce any, tho' ever so useful, but what may be applied to that purpose. And tho' a gun may be used in destroying game, and when it is so, doth then fall within the words of the act; yet as it is an instrument proper, and frequently necessary to be kept and used for other purposes, as the killing of noxious vermin, and the like, it is not the having a gun, without applying it in the destruction of game, that is prohibited by the act. [156]

Indeed, Lord Macclesfield commented in this regard that he himself was in the House of Commons when that game act was drafted and personally objected to the insertion of the word gun therein "because it might be attended with great inconvenience." [157]

In *Wingfield v. Stratford & Osman*, [158] appellant challenged his conviction under the Game Act and the confiscation of his gun and dog, the dog being a setting dog, the gun allegedly "an engine" for killing of game. The prosecution's plea was held faulty because it amounted to a general issue, [159] but the court pointed out that it would have held for appellant in any case as the prosecution had not alleged that the gun had been used for killing game:

It is not to be imagined, that it was the Intention of the Legislature, in making the 5 Ann.c.14 to disarm all the People of England. As Greyhounds, Setting Dogs . . . are expressly mentioned in that Statute, it is never necessary to alledge, that any of these have been used for killing or destroying the Game; and the rather, as they can scarcely be kept for any other Purpose than to kill or destroy the Game. But as Guns are not expressly mentioned in that Statute, and as a Gun may be kept for the Defence of a Man's House, and for divers other lawful Purposes, it was necessary to alledge, in order to its being comprehended within the Meaning of the Words "any other Engines to kill the Game", that the Gun had been used for killing the Game. [160]

By the middle of the eighteenth century, therefore, English courts could not "imagine" that Parliament intended to disarm the people of England.

In 1775, the American colonists fought for what they regarded as the rights of Englishmen. [161] Fortunately, there is ample contemporary evidence defining exactly what the rights of Englishmen were at that time in respect to the keeping and bearing of arms. In 1782, Granville Sharp, an English supporter of the American cause, wrote that no Englishman "can be truly Loyal" who opposed the principles of English law whereby the people are required to have "arms of defence and peace, for mutual as well as private defence." [162] He argued that the laws of England "always required the people to be armed, and not only to be armed, but to be expert in arms." [163] Edward Christian noted in his edition of Blackstone's Commentaries, published in 1793, that "ever since the modern practice of killing game with a gun had prevailed, everyone

is at liberty to keep or carry a gun, if he does not use it for the destruction of game." [164] But the most definitive opinion on the rights of Englishmen "to bear arms, and to instruct themselves in the use of them" came from the Recorder of London, the chief legal adviser to the mayor and council, in 1780. He stated:

The right of his majesty's Protestant subjects, to have arms for their own defence, and to use them for lawful purposes, is most clear and undeniable. It seems, indeed, to be considered, by the ancient laws of this kindom, not only as a right, but as a duty; for all the subjects of the realm, who are able to bear arms, are bound to be ready, at all times, to assist the sheriff, and other civil magistrates, in the execution of the laws and the preservation of the public peace. And that right, which every Protestant most unquestionably possesses, individually, may, and in many cases must, be exercised collectively, is likewise a point which I conceive to be most clearly established by the authority of judicial decisions and ancient acts of parliament, as well as by reason and common sense. [165]

V. Conclusion

Prior to the Restoration, Englishmen had the obligation to be armed for the public defense and the privilege of keeping arms for their personal defense. During the reigns of Charles II and James II, from 1660 to 1688, the Court and Parliament passed laws and issued proclamations that severely restricted the rights of the people to possess firearms, and followed a policy designed to control production and distribution of weapons. The English Bill of Rights of 1689, however, not only reasserted, but guaranteed, the right of Protestant subjects to be armed. The qualifying clauses of the Bill that appear to limit arms ownership were, in fact, interpreted in a way that permitted Catholics to have personal weapons and allowed Protestants, regardless of their social and economic station, to own firearms. The ancillary clause "as allowed by Law" merely limited the type of weapon that could be legally owned to a full-length firearm, enforced the ban on shot, and permitted legal definition of appropriate use. The right of Englishmen to have arms was a very real and an individual right. For all able-bodied men there was also the civic duty to bear arms in the militia. The twin concepts of a people armed and a people trained to arms were linked, but not inseparably.

If one applies English rights and practice to the construction of the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution, it is clear that the Amendment's first clause is an amplifying rather than a qualifying clause, and that a general rather than a select militia was intended. In fact, every American colony formed a militia that, like its English model, comprised all able-bodied male citizens. [166] This continued to be the practice when the young republic passed its first uniform militia act under its new constitution in 1792. [167] Such a militia implied a people armed and trained to arms.

The Second Amendment should properly be read to extend to every citizen the right to have arms for personal defense. This right was a legacy of the English, whose right to have arms was, at base, as much a personal right as a collective duty. It is significant that the American right to keep arms was unfettered, unlike the English right, which was limited in various ways throughout its development.

Thus, in guaranteeing the individual right to keep and bear arms, and the collective right to maintain a general militia, the Second Amendment amplified the tradition of the English Bill of Rights for the purpose of preserving and protecting government by and for the people.

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[1] 1 T. Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays*, Contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* 154, 162 (Leipzig 1850).

[2] See 1 W. Blackstone, *Commentaries* *139-40 (1st ed. Oxford 1765).

[3] De Lolme's book, *The Constitution of England*, was first published in 1771 and quickly went through an impressive number of editions. D'Israeli later referred to De Lolme as "the English Montesquieu." See Oxford University Press, 1 *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography* 332 (2d ed. 1903); 7 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 970 (11th ed. 1910).

[4] J. De Lolme, *The Constitution of England* 227 (New York 1793).

[5] See, e.g., L. Kennet & J. Anderson, *the Gun in America* 25-27 (1975); G. Newton & F. Zimring, *Firearms & Violence in American Life: A Staff Report Submitted to the National Commission on the Causes & Prevention of Violence* 255 (1968); Levin, *The Right to Bear Arms: The Development of the American Experience* 48 *Chi-Kent L. Rev.* 148 (1971); Weatherup, *Standing Armies and Armed Citizens: An Historical Analysis of the Second Amendment*, 2 *Hastings Const. L.Q.* 961 (1975).

[6] Miller, Sec. III *The Legal Basis for Firearms Controls*, in *Report to the American Bar Association* 22 (1975).

[7] See, e.g., Caplan, *Handgun Control: Constitutional or Unconstitutional? A Reply to Mayor Jackson*, 10 *N.C. Cent. L.J.* 53, 54 (1978); Weatherup, *supra* note 5, at 973-74; Whisker, *Historical Development and Subsequent Erosion of the Right to Keep and Bear Arms*, 78 *W. Va. L. Rev.* 171, 176-78 (1975).

[8] See Miller, *supra* note 6, at 25-28.

[9] See Caplan, *supra* note 7, at 54-55.

[10] See, e.g., Levin, *supra* note 5, at 154, 159; Weatherup, *supra* note 5, at 973-74.

[11] G. Newton & F. Zimring, *supra* note 5, at 255.

[12] L. Kennet & J. Anderson, *supra* note 5, at 25-27.

[13] For example, Newton and Zimring, fail to cite a single seventeenth or eighteenth century source for the critical assertion that the English Convention Parliament of 1688 intended to guarantee only a general, not an individual, right to have arms. See G. Newton & F. Zimring, *supra* note 5, at 254-55, n.12. Kennet and Anderson conclude that in the seventeenth century firearms "were not generally held . . . because of their inefficiency, costliness, and general scarcity," but provide no evidence of their efficiency, cost, or availability in that period. See L. Kennet & J. Anderson, *supra* note 5, at 27.

[14] 1 J. Paterson, *Commentaries on the Liberty of the Subject and the Laws of England Relating to the Security of the Person* 442 (London 1877).

[15] C. Greenwood, *Firearms Control: A Study of Armed Crime and Firearms Control in England and Wales* 10 (1972).

[16] Caplan, *supra* note 7, at 54.

[17] Whisker, *supra* note 7, at 176.

[18] Weatherup, *supra* note 5, at 973-74. For the precise English guarantee of the rights of the subject to have arms, see *The Bill of Rights*, 1 *W. & M.*, Sess. 2, ch. 2 (1689).

[19] 10 *H.C. Jour.*, 1688-93, 21-22; 1 *W. & M.*, Sess. 2, ch. 2 (1689).

[20] Weatherup, *supra* note 5, at 974.

[21] See, e.g., Caplan, *supra* note 7, at 53-54; Emery, *The Constitutional Right to Keep and Bear Arms*, 28 *Harv. L. Rev.* 473-75 (1915); Hays, *The Right to Bear Arms, A Study in Judicial Misinterpretation*, 2 *Wm. & Mary L. Rev.* 383 (1960);

Levin, *supra* note 5, at 148; Weatherup, *supra* note 5, at 964; Whisker, *supra* note 7, at 175-76.

[22] Charter of Connecticut, Charles II, 1 The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut 7 (Hartford 1850) [hereinafter cited as Records of Connecticut]. See also Charter of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, William and Mary, 1 Acts and Resolves of the Province of Massachusetts Bay 14 (Boston 1869).

[23] See T. Barnes, The English Legal System: Carryover to the Colonies 16 (1975).

[24] See, e.g., Records of Connecticut, *supra* note 22, at 285-86; 19 The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia 137 *passim* (Atlanta 1911); The Book of the General Lawes and Libertyes Concerning the Inhabitants of the Massachusetts 39-41 (Hunt. Lib. reprint 1975) (1st ed. Boston 1648); 1 Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England 77, 94 (Providence 1856); W. Billings, The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century 172 (1975).

[25] See, e.g., Acts of the Grand Assembly of Virginia 1623-24, Nos. 24 & 25; Acts of the Grand Assembly of Virginia 1673, Act 2; The Compact with the Charter and General Laws of the Colony of New Plymouth 44-45 (1836); 8 Records of Connecticut, *supra* note 22, at 380; 1 Colonial Laws of New York 161 (1894); South Carolina Stat. No. 206 (1703).

[26] B. Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution 43 (1967).

[27] See, e.g., 2 The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787, 509, 617 (M. Ferrand ed. 1911); Debates and Proceedings in the Convention of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Held in the Year 1788, 198-99 (Boston 1856); Debates and Other Proceedings of the Convention of Virginia, 1788, 271 (2d ed. Richmond 1805); The Federalist Nos. 26, 84 (Hamilton).

[28] Earlier versions of sections I, II, & III of this article appear in Malcolm, Disarmed: The Loss of the Right to Bear Arms in Restoration England (Bunting Inst., Radcliffe College 1980).

[29] See R. Burn, 2 The Justice of the Peace and Parish Officer 16-20 (London 1755); F. Maitland, The Constitutional History of England 276-77 (1968) (1st ed. Cambridge 1908).

[30] See Assizes of Arms, Hen. 2 (1181); Statute of Winchester, Edw. (1285); 4 & 5 Phil. and M., ch. 3 (1557).

[31] See C. Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army 24-25 (2d ed. 1966).

[32] Manuscripts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries contain repeated complaints to this effect. For printed comment, see, e.g., J. Morrill, Cheshire, 1630-1660, 26 (1974); G. Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts 187-88 (1928).

[33] See C. Cruickshank, *supra* note 31, at 19-20; H. Hallam, The Constitutional History of England 386 (London 1870).

[34] See, e.g., R. Ashton, The English Civil War 55-59, 66 (1978); L. Boynton, The Elizabethan Militia 212 *passim*, 264-65 (1967); C. Cruickshank, *supra* note 31, at 5-11.

[35] See L. Boynton, *supra* note 34, at 245-54.

[36] See R. Burn, *supra* note 29, at 17-20.

[37] See *id.*

[38] See *id.*

[39] See *id.* at 512.

[40] See *id.*

[41] See Statute of Winchester, Edw. (1285).

[42] See, e.g., 2 Acts & Ords. Interregnum 397-402 (London 1911); An Act for Setting the Militia of the Commonwealth of England (London 1650); 4 & 5 Phil. & M., ch. 3 (1557); An Act Declaring the Sole Right of the Militia to Be in the King, 14 Car. 2, ch. 3 (1662).

[43] See G. Sharp, Tracts, Concerning the Antient and Only True Legal Means of National Defence, By a Free Militia 12 (London 1782).

[44] *Id.* at 13.

[45] 33 Hen. 8, ch. 6 (1541).

[46] *Id.*

[47] 2 & 3 Edw. 6, ch. 14 (1549); Statute of Northampton, 2 Edw. 3, ch. 3 (1328).

[48] W. Fisher, The Forest of Essex 214-15 (1887).

[49] See C. Cruickshank, *supra* note 31, at 24.

[50] This occurred, for example, just prior to the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642. See Manning, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, in *The English Civil War and After, 1642-1658*, 16 (R. Perry ed. 1970). Charles I empowered Catholics who had been disarmed to rearm in 1642. See *A Discourse of the Warr in Lancashire*, 62 Chetham Soc. 12-14 (1864); *Tracts Relating to Military Proceedings in Lancashire during the Great Civil War*, 2 Chetham Soc. 38-40 (1844).

[51] See J. Jones, *The Revolution of 1688 in England* 77 n.2 (1972).

[52] See G. Roberts, *The Social History of the People of the Southern Counties of England in Past Centuries* viii-ix (London 1856).

[53] *Id.*

[54] 6 Commons Debates 1621, at 318 (1935).

[55] R. Ward, *Animadversions of Warre, or a Militaire Magazine of the Truest Rules and Ablest Instruction For the Managing of Warre* 150 (London 1639).

[56] *The Latest Remarkable Truths from Worcester, Chester, Salop in Tracts Relating to the Civil War in Cheshire, 1641-1659*, reprinted in 65 Chetham Soc. (n.s.) 238 app. B (1909).

[57] William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire, *Correspondence as Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire from 1660 to 1666*, Additional MS. 34, 306, fol. 12, British Library, London.

[58] LeFleming MS, Historical Manuscripts Commission, 12th Report, Pt. 7, at 44 (1890).

[59] See 4 *Memoirs of the Verney Family* 167 (1899).

[60] See E. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters* 71 (1975).

[61] Much evidence of the widespread ownership of firearms is scattered throughout the personal and public documents of this period. The most accessible proof is found in the county quarter session records, some of which are in print, which cite English men and women from all walks of life for misuse of firearms. See, e.g., *Minutes of the Proceedings in Quarter*

Sessions Held for the Parts of Kesteven in the County of Lincoln, 1674-1695, reprinted in Lincoln Record Soc. 25, 26 (1931); Quarter Session Records for the County of Somerset, 1607-77, reprinted in Somerset Rec. Soc. 23-24, 28, 34 (1907-19); Warwick County Records: Quarter Session Order Books, 1625-90, reprinted in Warwick County Council 6, 7 (1935-53); Worcestershire County Records Division 1: Documents Relating to Quarter Sessions, in Worcestershire Hist. Soc. passim (1899-1900).

[62] See sources cited *supra* note 61.

[63] See, e.g., E. Thompson, *supra* note 60, at 71; J. Western, *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century* 4, 5 (1965); 4 *Memoirs of the Verney Family* 167 (1899); Letter from West to Fleming, Jan. 27, 1667, LeFleming MS, *supra* note 58, at 44.

[64] See 92 Clarendon MS 143, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

[65] See J. Western, *supra* note 63, at 4-5.

[66] See *id.*

[67] See *id.* at 4; Privy Council Registers, P.C. 2, vol. 55, fol. 520 (Jan. 22, 1661), Public Record Office, London.

[68] E. Hyde, 2 *The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon* 117 (Oxford 1827).

[69] *Id.*

[70] See 3 *Memoirs Illustrative of the Life and Writings of John Evelyn* 246 (deBeer ed. 1955).

[71] Two Treatises Addressed to the Duke of Buckingham, Lansdowne MS 805, fol. 79 British Library, London.

[72] *Id.*

[73] See 8 H. C. Jour. 5-6; E. Hyde, *supra* note 68, vol. 1 at 335.

[74] See 8 H. C. Jour. 142-43, 161, 163, 167.

[75] See *id.* at 167.

[76] 4 *Parl. Hist. Eng.*, 145 (London 1808-20).

[77] See J. Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution* 196 (1966); J. Malcolm, *Caesar's Due: Loyalty and King Charles 1642-1646*, at 17-21 (1983).

[78] A militia act was not passed until the spring of 1662, although a temporary measure was passed a year earlier. See 13 Car. 2, ch. 6 (1661); 13 & 14 Car. 2, ch. 3 (1662).

[79] Historical Manuscripts Commission, 5th Report 153 (1876).

[80] See *id.*; State Papers Domestic, Charles II, S.P. 29, vol. 11, fols. 146-74 (Aug. 26, 1660), Public Record Office, London; Instructions to Lords Lieutenants, Whitehall, 1660, Egerton MS 2542, fol. 512, British Library, London.

[81] See sources quoted in Malcolm, *supra* note 28, at 8-9.

[82] See, e.g., Letter Book of Thomas Belasyse, Viscount Fauconberg Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding of Yorkshire, 1665-84, Additional MS 41,254, fols. 20-22, British Library, London, which reported that the militia had not been ordered to muster for several years. See also J. Western, *supra* note 63, at 48.

[83] See, e.g., Norfolk Lieutenancy Journal, 1661-1674, Additional MS 11,601, fol. 29, British Library, London; Earl of Westmorland Letter Book, 1660-1665, Northamptonshire Militia, Additional MS 34,222, fols. 25-26, 32, British Library, London; Westmorland to Vane, July 21, 1662, Clarendon State Papers, vol. 77, fol. 66a, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

[84] Additional MS 34,306, *supra* note 57, at fol. 14. The King went still further and, for a time, required militia commanders to keep a portion of their men on duty at all times. This scheme proved unworkable. See Additional MS 34,222, *supra* note 83, at fol. 43; Additional MS 34,304, fol. 44; D. Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II* 253 (1967).

[85] Instructions to Lords Lieutenants, Whitehall, 1660, Egerton MS 2542, *supra* note 80, at fol. 512.

[86] See *id.*

[87] "A Proclamation For Suppressing of disorderly and unseasonable Meetings, in Taverns and Tipling Houses, And also forbidding Footmen to wear Swords, or other Weapons, within London, Westminster, and their Liberties", Sept. 29, 1660, B.M. 669, fol. 26 (13), British Library, London. This and subsequent proclamations cited in this article are calendared in R. Steele, *Tudor and Stuart Proclamations* (1910). Originals can be found at the British Library and the citations will be to these.

[88] "A Proclamation commanding all cashiered Soldiers and other Persons that cannot give a good account of their being here to depart out of the Cities of London and Westminster", Dec. 17, 1660, B.M. 669, fol. 26 (37), British Library, London.

[89] *Id.*

[90] See Privy Council Registers, P.C. 2, vol. 55, fol. 71 (Dec. 1660), Public Record Office, London.

[91] See *id.*

[92] See Privy Council Register, P.C. 2, vol. 55, fol. 187 (Sept. 4, 1661), fol. 189 (Mar. 29, 1661), Public Record Office, London.

[93] See Burrage, *The Fifth Monarchy Insurrections*, 25 *The English Hist. Rev.* 722-47 (1910).

[94] 11 H.L. Jour. 243.

[95] See 1 J. Clarke, *The Life of James the Second, King of England, etc. Collected out of Memoirs Writ of His Own Hand* 390-91 (London 1816).

[96] See Additional MS. 34,222, *supra* note 83, at fol. 15.

[97] *Id.* at fol. 17. The seizure of arms and persons was so zealously carried out--a Derbyshire man claimed his house had been searched nine times in one week--that in mid-January the King had to issue a proclamation to reassure outraged Londoners that the customary restrictions against unwarranted search and seizure were still in effect. See B.M. 669, fol. 26 (49), British Library, London.

[98] See B.M. 1851, ch. 8 (133), (134), (135), British Library, London.

[99] *Id.*

[100] This proclamation was issued on June 22, 1662. There is no record of a proclamation for 1663, but on November 18, 1664, June 28, 1665, and June 10, 1670, the proclamation was reissued. See R. Steele, *supra* note 87.

[101] 13 Car. 2, ch. 6 (1661); 14 Car. 2, ch. 3 (1662).

[102] *Id.*

[103] Sir John Dalrymple observed that in government rhetoric, "mobs were swelled into insurrections, and insurrections into concerted rebellion." J. Dalrymple, 1 *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* 26 (2d ed. London 1771-73).

[104] See J. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability England, 1675-1725*, at 21-22 (1967).

[105] See *id.* at 20-21. See also C. Hill, *Reformation to Industrial Revolution* 110-11 (1967).

[106] The English monarch had only a small bureaucracy and was dependent upon the nobility and, in particular, the gentry throughout the realm to carry out numerous functions of government as unpaid volunteers. In reference to the militia itself, see J. Western, *supra* note 63, at 16-17, 63.

[107] See 13 & 14 Car. 2, ch. 3 (1662-63).

[108] See 22 & 23 Car. 2, ch. 25 (1671).

[109] The very first game act to set a property qualification on the right to hunt appeared in 1389, eight years after that century's devastating peasant rebellion. The preamble to 13 Ric. 2, ch. 13, "None shall hunt but they which have a sufficient living" read: "Item, for as much as divers artificers, labourers, and servants, and grooms, keep greyhounds and other dogs, and on the holy days, when good Christian people be at church, hearing divine service, they go hunting in parks, warrens, and connigries of lords and others, to the very great destruction of the same, and sometimes under such colour they make their assemblies, conferences, and conspiracies for to rise and disobey their allegiance." See J. Chitty, *A Treatise on the Game Laws, and On Fisheries* 368 (2d ed. London 1826); W. Holdsworth, 4 *A History of English Law* 505 (1924).

[110] See 19 Hen. 7, ch. 11 (1495); 5 Eliz., ch. 21 (1562); 3 Jac. ch. 13 (1605); 7 Jac. ch. 13 (1609); 13 Car. 2, ch. 10 (1663).

[111] See sources cited *supra* note 110.

[112] The Game Act of 1609, in effect until the act of 1671, provided that those who had personal property of £400 were entitled to hunt. This permitted merchants and professionals whose wealth was not based on land to hunt. The Act of 1671, however, abolished this category. Compare 7 Jac., ch. 13 (1609) with 22 & 23 Car. 2, ch. 25 (1671).

[113] J. Chitty, *Observations of the Game Laws, with Proposed Alterations for the Protection and Increase of Game, and the Decrease of Crime* 180 (London 1816).

[114] 22 & 23 Car. 2, ch. 25 (1671).

[115] *Id.*

[116] From at least 1665 there was growing distrust of the regime of Charles II. At the beginning of 1667, Samuel Pepys, a civil servant, found the royal court "[a] sad, vicious, negligent Court, and all sober men there fearful of the ruin of the whole kingdom this next year; from which good God, deliver us!" Cited by D. Witcombe, *Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons, 1663-1674*, at 55 (1966); see D. Ogg, *supra* note 84, at 313; 22 & 23 Car. 2, ch. 7 (1671).

[117] Persons judged to be suspicious by the royal administration were those active in the parliamentary party during the Civil War and its aftermath, and those who belonged to the Protestant sects that refused to remain within the Church of

England. The Quakers were prominent sufferers. See, e.g., fol. 18, Additional MS 34,306, British Library, London, and 13 Car. 2, ch. 6 (1661), a militia act which noted that since June 24, 1660, less than a month after Charles II's return, "divers persons suspected to be fanaticks, sectaries or disturbers of the peace have been assaulted, arrested, detained or imprisoned, [by the militia] and divers arms have been seized and houses searched for arms." The militia had specifically been ordered to disarm all persons "notoriously knowne to be of ill principles or [who] have lately . . . by words or actions shewn any disaffection to his Majestie or his Government, or in any kind disturbed the publique peace." Additional MS 34,222, *supra* note 83, at 15.

[118] See J. Western, *supra* note 63, at 48-51; Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1686-87, at 314 (1964).

[119] James II decided to abandon his kingdom in the face of a growing army of his subjects led by William of Orange and the desertion of his own army. The realm was thrown into a constitutional crisis, as no Parliament was in session and only the king could legally summon a parliament. William consulted with the nobility and former members of the Commons and on their advice summoned a convention parliament to meet to resolve the kingdom's succession. He promised to abide by its decision. A convention parliament had been called in 1659 by George Monck, again in the absence of a reigning monarch, and it was this body that invited Charles II to return as king. Unlike its predecessor, however, the Convention Parliament of 1688 was determined to ensure the rights of subjects and to prevent any infringement by future monarchs. See *infra* sources cited at note 120.

[120] We have only sketchy records remaining of the debates of the Convention Parliament. The best of these in print are the notes made by John Somers, chairman of the committee that drafted the English Bill of Rights reprinted in 2 Miscellaneous State Papers from 1501 to 1726 *passim* & esp. 407-18 (London 1778). Somers's notes are punctuated with the angry comments of members at the use of the Militia Act in particular to disarm law-abiding citizens. Sir John Maynard was furious that "an Act of Parliament was made to disarm all Englishmen, whom the lieutenant should suspect, by day or night, by force or otherwise" and branded it "an abominable thing to disarm a nation, to set up a standing army." *Id.* at 407. Another member argued that there was "no safety but the consent of the nation--the constitution being limited, there is a good foundation for defensive arms--It has given us right to demand full and ample security." *Id.* at 410. See also L. Schwoerer, *The Declaration of Rights, 1689* (1981) (a recent study of the Convention Parliament).

[121] 1 W. & M., Sess. 2, ch. 2 (1689). The English Declaration of Rights drawn up by the Convention Parliament was approved by the first parliament summoned by William and Mary and incorporated with the legislation recognizing them as king and queen. It was thereafter known as the English Bill of Rights.

[122] See Weatherup, *supra* note 5.

[123] See *id.* at 962-64.

[124] *Id.* at 973-74.

[125] Anonymous Account of the Convention Proceeding, 1688, Rawlinson MS D1079, fol. 10, Bodleian Library, Oxford. The committee was instructed "to distinguish such of the . . . heads [of grievances] as are introductory of new laws, from those that are declaratory of ancient rights." The revised version of their report can be found in 10 H.C. Jour. 1688-93, at 21-22.

[126] See G. Burnet, 2 Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time 534 (London 1840).

[127] See Weatherup, *supra* note 5, at 974.

[128] The Whigs had sizable majorities on the committees which drafted the Declaration of Rights, and those most outspoken in favor of a general possession of arms for the purpose of resisting tyranny were Whigs. See L. Schwoerer, *supra* note 120, at 152; and members quoted in J. Somers, *supra* note 120, at 107-18, with their affiliation as described by Schwoerer. See also D. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661-1689*, at 382-83, 422-23 (1969).

[129] Rawlinson MS D1079, *supra* note 125, at fol. 8.

[130] 10 H.C. Jour., 1688-93, at 21-22.

[131] 1 W. & M., Sess. 2, ch. 2 (1689).

[132] J. Western, *Monarchy and Revolution: The English State in the 1680's*, 339 (1972).

[133] For examples of Whig efforts to incorporate into legislation their view that the citizenry must be armed to prevent tyranny, see 10 H.C. Jour. 621; 5 Parl. Hist. Eng., *supra* note 76, at 344; N. Luttrell, *the Parliamentary Diary of Narcissus Luttrell, 1691-1693*, at 444 (H. Horwitz ed. 1972). See also 2 W. Blackstone, *Commentaries* 441 (E. Christian ed. London 1793-95) (editor's comment); and 1 W. Blackstone, *supra* note 2, at *140-41.

[134] G. Newton & F. Zimring, *supra* note 5, at 255 (quoting from 2 J. Story, *Commentaries on the Constitution* 678 (3d ed. 1858)).

[135] These acts were: 33 Henry 8, ch. 6 (1541) and 2 & 3 Edw. 6, ch. 14 (1549). For evidence of their continued enforcement, see sources cited *supra* note 61 (relating to quarter session records); G. Sharp, *supra* note 43, at 17-18; *Rex v. Alsop*, 4 Mod. Rep. 51 (K.B. 1691).

[136] See *supra* notes 125-26 and accompanying text.

[137] 1 W. & M., ch. 15 (1689).

[138] 4 & 5 W. & M., ch. 23 (1692).

[139] In July, 1689, members of the House of Commons passed a measure "for ordering the Forces in the several Counties of this Kingdom," which was designed to make the militia more efficient, to strengthen local control over it, and to eliminate its powers to search for and seize weapons of so-called suspects. The measure ran into opposition in the House of Lords and was lost when the King dissolved Parliament. See J. Western, *supra* note 132, at 340 n.1, 343; J. Western, *supra* note 63, at 85-89; 5 Parl. Hist. Eng., *supra* note 76, at 344.

[140] 1 W. & M. ch. 15 (1689).

[141] 4 & 5 W. & M., ch. 23 (1692).

[142] 22 Car. 2, ch. 25 (1671).

[143] 4 & 5 W. & M., *supra* note 141.

[144] H. Rolle, *Reports* 91 (London 1675).

[145] 10 H.C. Jour. 824.

[146] A future parliament was always at liberty to amend a statute or to repeal it. During the debate on this rider an opponent of the measure argued that it "savours of the politics to arm the mob, which I think is not very safe for any government." See N. Luttrell, *supra* note 133, at 444. The Whig view expressed later by Blackstone did not yet prevail.

[147] 10 H.C. Jour. 824.

[148] See 5 Ann, ch. 14 (1706). This statute levied a fine against any person or persons "not qualified by the laws of this realm so to do" who "shall keep or use any greyhounds, setting dogs . . . or any other engines to kill and destroy the game." *Id.*

The Devonshire Quarter Sessions clearly regarded the possession of firearms as legal after passage of the 1692 Game Act, for in 1704 it explained that while the houses of unqualified persons could be searched for dogs, nets and other "engines," no Protestant was to be deprived of his gun. See A.H.A. Hamilton, *Quarter Sessions from Queen Elizabeth to Queen Ann* 289 (1878).

[149] 5 Ann, ch. 14 (1706).

[150] J. Chitty, *supra* note 109, at 83 & note c.

[151] *Rex v. Gardner, Strange*, 2 Reports 1098, 93 Eng. Rep. 1056 (K.B. 1739); 1 R. Burn, *supra* note 29, at 442-43.

[152] See *supra* text accompanying note 114.

[153] *Rex v. Gardner*, 93 Eng. Rep. at 1056.

[154] *Id.*

[155] *Id.*

[156] *Id.*

[157] 1 R. Burn, *supra* note 29, at 443. Lord Macclesfield sat on an earlier case, *King v. King*, 3 Geo. 2, in which the question of whether guns were intentionally omitted from the statute was raised but never determined. This is noted in the *Gardner* decision, along with his comments. See 93 Eng. Rep. at 1056.

[158] *Wingfield v. Stratford & Osman*, Sayer, Reports 15-17, 96 Eng. Rep. 787 (K.B. 1752).

[159] *Id.* at 16, 96 Eng. Rep. at 787.

[160] *Id.* (Lee, C.J., concurring).

[161] For extensive treatment of this subject see B. Bailyn, *supra* note 26. Bailyn writes, for example: "For the primary goal of the American Revolution, which transformed American life and introduced a new era in human history, was not the overthrow or even the alteration of the existing social order but the preservation of political liberty threatened by the apparent corruption of the [English] constitution, and the establishment in principle of the existing conditions of liberty." *Id.* at 19.

[162] G. Sharp, *supra* note 43, at 18, 27.

[163] *Id.* at 18.

[164] 2 W. Blackstone, *Commentaries* 411 (E. Christian ed. 1793-95).

[165] W. Blizard, *Desultory Reflections on Police* 59-60 (London 1785) (emphasis in original).

[166] See *supra* notes 24-25 and accompanying text.

[167] That act stipulated that "each and every free able-bodied white male citizen . . . between the ages of 18 and 45 . . . shall severally and respectively be enrolled in the militia." Act of May 8, 1792, 2d Cong., 1st Sess., ch. 33.

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THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS, A STUDY IN JUDICIAL MISINTERPRETATION

by STUART R. HAYS [article link](#) [article link](#)

INTRODUCTION

Since the very dawn of time, man had weapons to protect and defend himself. As primitive man learned the interplays of the tribal order which required set standards, he also learned the advantages of belonging to the tribe. The early tribes were based on the inter-action of the group against those outside the tribal group; not, against the members of the tribal group. From this interplay evolved a system of early social law.

The problem of the social control of weapons is not new. In 124 B.C. the Imperial Chancellor Kung-Sun Hung petitioned the Emperor Han to take the people's arms from them. The emperor replied:

Your subject has heard that when the ancients made the five kinds of weapons, it was not for the purpose of killing each other, but to prevent tyranny and to punish evil. When people lived in peace, these weapons were to be prepared against emergencies and to kill the fierce animals. If there were military affairs, then the weapons were used to set up defenses and form battle arrays...[1]

The petition was turned down, stressing the right of the individual to bear arms for the common protection of society and the individual.

Weapons have been used in warfare for defense, offense, and revolution. It is with the defensive and revolutionary forces that the Second Amendment concerns itself. As part of the great power of the revolutionary force, weapons are an element of the control of men's destiny. In the operation of government they are a safeguard against tyranny. It has been said the Tudors were rulers surrounded by an army: that of the English people.

Whenever men have banded together, in that fiction known as society, a series of laws have evolved. When these laws fail some form of social revolution results, whether it be widespread or guerilla in nature. England, with the tradition for law, has felt the force of arms in the reconstruction of the social order.

The Norman conquest of Anglo-Saxon England brought with it a legal upheaval that lasted for centuries, while the Angles and Saxons "reformed" the Norman administrator with Anglo-Saxon law and sword. Gradually the Norman Conquerors became conquered by the "legal system" and the rights of the common man began to evolve. Coke considers "due process of law" evolving during the reign of Edward III (1326-1377).[2] Throughout the Commentaries there pervades the theory of government by law, with remedies at law to prevent the usurpation of power; hence the special writs of Prohibition and Mandamus. The contrasting theory is government by revolution and insurrection to correct usurpation. Our South American neighbors with their foundations in the Roman-Civil law prefer this latter.

During the Reformation there was a tendency to revive the Roman law; this reception was powerful enough to shake the common law to its roots, but insufficient to overpower it. The Justinian theory of *legibus solutus*, the leader is absolved from the law, gained favor with the English Stuarts. In contemporary France the *lettre de cachet*, which permitted indefinite imprisonment by the ruler or high official were the popular modes of revenge and non-judicial ruling. The legal systems began to fail and revolution was the solution.

History has proved that no man without a standing army can subjugate a free and armed people. George III did not profit from this advice. Americans did understand the nature and effects of law by force and edict. Hence the preservation of the militia and the right to bear arms: remembered also was the right to revolt when the laws of the government began to oppress; witness the War Between the States in 1861.

The Second Amendment was thought to be an expression of the common law rights of all Englishmen since the bill of rights of 1688. A grievance of Colonial America was the keeping of a standing army in the Colonies as a mode of enforcing the "king's justice". A cursory glance shows the amendment to be a limitation upon this practice and an expression of the common law as was inherited from England.[3]

ENGLAND: THE COMMON LAW AND THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS

From the very beginnings of early "England" the Saxons, Angles, Picts, Jutes, and other tribal factions possessed weapons for waging war and self-defense. The Roman conquest of lower "England" served to increase the fighting ability of these native people. The very early laws of Anglo-Saxon "England" were derived from the social pressures of the family group. This group of kin-folk was called the kindred and was connected in name and "blood" with the legendary characters of several ages before the beginnings of recorded time.[4]

The determining factor in the kindred was the blood line, which determined the proper faction to which one belonged. The kindred was a society for the protection of the various members of the family group and served from the beginnings as a deterrent in feuds and warfare. The right of self-defense was recognized only to the extent by which one kindred was stronger than another. Revenge for death involved the entire kindred of each party involved in the homicide. This bloody form of revenge lasted until it became the custom (law) to "purchase revenge" and thus limit the combatants to those originally wronged and not to cousins several times removed.[5] Slowly the laws evolved so that the members of the kindred could disclaim the feud itself, and leave the wronged party to his own revenge.[6] Thus the basis for the kindred was the force and armed might of the kindred itself. As the individual might grew so did the structure of the laws of England, until legend tells us that a strong man called Arthur united much of England under the laws of the "Round Table". By circa 690 A.D. the *ceorl*, the lowest free social position in the kindred, owed the duty of protection to his lord or immediate master.[7] This "duty owed" in terms of military service and readiness was the militia of the day and involved all who could bear arms.

The kindreds expanded and became boroughs, which served as the principal defensive units, and were the equivalent of the medieval castles. They depended upon the services of the free-man for their defense and thus there was no need for a standing army.[8] By the year 1066 A.D. and the Battle of Hastings the Anglo-Saxon kindred had become the bastion of society and law in the "early dark ages": the Norman invasion began the struggle for human rights. The kindred was more personal than the feudal system under the conquerors; and, while great steps were made in the advancing of administration, legend and fact tell also of great advances in oppression. The right to self-defense was not recognized if the dead was Norman.

The Norman conquest brought with it the feudal system in a complete form, which reached its zenith in England during the 16th Century. During this period the kings began to formulate plans called assizes to determine the amount and tenure of their subjects in the military service of the king. Standing armies were unknown and little desired by the majority of free-men.

The Assize of Arms of Henry II (1181) required every free-man to keep arms suited to his station in life, and to be prepared to fight for the common defense and the king.[9] It also developed the system of scutage, by which the subject could pay money to the king and avoid military service: it did not forfeit the right to bear or own personal arms. This right was protected by Henry II in an un-named charter of 1154, in which Henry declared that all men should retain the free rights and customs that they had always possessed.[10] Richard I also assized the rights and duties of the nobles and free-men to the king and increased the privileges of scutage in the Assize of Arms of 1198.[11]

This position continued until the capture of Richard during the Crusades and the ascent of John to the throne. In 1210 a contemporary scholar said:

...all men bore witness that never since the time of Arthur was there a king who was so greatly feared...[12]

Thus the stage was set and the scene was Runnymede in 1215.

Section 61 of the Magna Carta provided that if the King (John) did not follow the provisions of the charter, the Barons should have a right to correct the King by force until the King should begin to follow the articles of the charter.[13] Thus the right of lawful revolution was born into the constitutional law of England. This is of major import because without the right to revolt there is less reason to preserve the right to bear arms. This particular portion of the carta has been reaffirmed as were the regulations concerning the bearing of arms and tenure by serjeanty.[14]

It was also recognized at an early date that the society had certain rights against being terrorized by those going armed. The Statute of Northampton (1328) made it illegal to ride in the darkness armed with a dangerous weapon and terrorizing the people.[15] Thus the right to bear arms for the purpose of self-defense and revolution were not impeded, but the "police power" to limit the use of weapons was recognized.

With the ascent of the Stuarts to the throne, England underwent sudden change. James I and Charles I made fine use of the scutage and raised small standing armies. After the Commonwealth, James II and Charles II raised even larger armies until the time of William and Mary (1688). Charles II forbade the owning of arms by anyone not owning land with rents of one hundred pounds or higher.[16]

The year 1688 brought the bill of rights which provided that standing armies were a menace, and that the people should all have the right to bear arms equally:

That the raising or keeping of a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with the consent of the parliament, be against the law...[17]

That the subjects known as protestants may have arms suitable to their conditions, and as allowed by law...[18]

These two provisions would seem to reaffirm the theory and right to revolution, for they were born in revolution. Blackstone, speaking of the evils of the standing army, said:

Our notions, indeed, of the dangers of standing armies, in time of peace are derived in a great measure from the principles and examples of our English ancestors. In England, the king possessed the power of raising standing armies in time of peace according to his own pleasure. And this prerogative was justly esteemed dangerous to the public liberties. Upon the revolution of 1688 Parliament wisely insisted upon a bill of rights, which should furnish an adequate security for the future. [19]

In addition to the right of revolution is the right of personal self-defense. Without this basic right there would be no reason for man to bear arms. The right to bear arms must therefore draw its strength from the rights of man to resort to force when law fails or an adequate remedy is not immediately available to prevent the loss of human life. The thin line between self-defense with regard to actual bodily fear and that of stopping a progressing felony is in itself a delicate modern problem. A more ancient problem is that of self-defense when faced with an aggressive deadly force. Little is known about the early laws regarding self-defense; it is known that the Saxons and Angles relied on the kindred to avenge the death caused by an outsider of the kindred. What occurred when the killer was a member of the same kindred as that of the deceased is unknown.

The earliest cases of the 13th Century declare that the party was to be found guilty subject to the King's pleasure.[20] This usually meant a royal pardon for the offender. The Statute of Gloucester (1278) provided that the King be notified in all cases of defensive homicide.[21] This position was later clarified by a statute of Henry VIII (1532) which declared that the defendant be found not guilty (of murdrum) of homicide.[22] This was said to be declarative of the common law.[23] Thus man by the 16th Century had the right of self-defense of his property and kin. This is a portion of the American common law as inherited from England.

It is interesting to note that by 1920 the tide of public opinion in England had so changed as to practically eliminate the ownership of all weapons.[24] It is ironic to see that the very nation that was founded on the right to bear arms and limit the standing army had to beg the American people to ship them small arms during the early 1940's.

It then stands to reason that the right to bear arms rests on three solid English rights: the right of revolution; the right of group self-preservation; and, the right of self-defense. Without these rights there would be no reason for the bearing of arms. If there were no reason for bearing arms, then there would be no valid legal basis for the right to bear arms. These basic rights are a portion of the English common law and had evolved prior to the landing at Jamestown in 1607. Further, these basic rights applied to all Englishmen and not merely to those living in England and personal to England. They are the basis for the interpretation of the Constitution of the United States.[25] The Code of the Commonwealth of Virginia, as do many other state codes, provides that the common law of England is in full force and effect as it existed at the time of the reign of (fourth year) of James I (1607) and is not repealed by statute.[26]

REVOLUTION; CONFEDERATION; and CONSTITUTION

America in the 17th and 18th Centuries was a frontier country. The sense of group self-preservation and self-defense was strong; weapons were the natural backbone of the wilderness civilization. As the frontier was pushed back into the hills, urban areas developed and flourished. A new instinct of self-defense and self-administered local law developed. Thus at the time of the Revolution (1776) nearly every man was an army unto himself, equipped with rifle and powder. The retaining of arms was encouraged by the mother country.[27] With arms came the pushing back of the curtain of the frontier and expansion in quest of the gold and jewels that were not there.

When the shot "was heard round the world" and the Revolutionary War began, it was a war fought with musket and powder belonging to the revolutionaries.[28] With the surrender at Yorktown the victorious colonies bound themselves together with the Articles of Confederation. They were a series of weak and ineffective laws, based on the absolute consent of all the colonies involved.[29] The solution to these weak Articles was the proposed Constitution of 1787. It provided for a stronger central government, which could provide for the self-preservation of the nation in time of emergency and the posse comitatus to enforce the interior laws.

The Commonwealth of Virginia was the acknowledged leader in the fight for freedom; she did not want to be "oppressed" by another central government. For this reason were the "checks and balances" included in the central portion of Randolph's Virginia Plan. This plan did not include provisions relating to the militia and the rights to bear arms.[30]

What fears promoted the constitutional conventions and the bill of rights? The Articles of Confederation did not provide for a mode of coercing a sister state to come to the aid of another; nor, was there any mode of raising a central army or armed force in time of emergency.[31] With travel slow and time of the essence, this was a major consideration. The (major)

objection was the fact that the English army had done nothing but oppress the colonies; and, indeed, all Englishmen since the time of its creation.

...all nations, under all governments, must have parties; the great secret is to control them; there are but two ways, either by monarchy and standing army, or by balance in the Constitution where the people have a voice, and there is no balance, there will be everlasting fluctuations, revolutions, and horrors, until a standing army, with a general at its head, commands the peace, or the necessity of an equilibrium is made appear to all, and is adopted by all.[32]

The militia is the natural defense of a free country against sudden foreign invasions, domestic usurpation of power by rulers. It is against sound policy for a free people to keep up large military establishments and standing armies in time of peace, both from the enormous expense with which they afford ambitious and unprincipled rulers to subvert the government, or trammel upon the rights of the people. The rights of the citizens to keep and bear arms, has justly been considered as the palladium of the liberties of a republic; since it offers a strong moral check against the usurpation and arbitrary powers of rulers: and will generally, even if these are successful in the first instance, enable the people to resist and triumph over them.[33]

The greatest worry was of usurpation of the military powers of government by either a strong civil or military leader. The Constitution must cure these evils or not exist. Virginia already was committed to the position of maintaining a strong militia for self-defense and to prevent the usurpation of internal powers in the Virginia Bill of Rights of 1776:

That a well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defense of a free state: that standing armies in time of peace, should be avoided, as dangerous to liberty; and that in all cases the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.[34]

Thus the struggle for a strong constitution was set, the scenes were Williamsburg, New York, Boston, and other capital cities, not Runnymede.

On May 29, 1787, sufficient delegates had gathered in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation. Governor Randolph objected to the Confederation on the ground that it was ineffective defensively.[35] Mr. Williamson agreed, but was firmly against any decrease in the states' police power by the right of the proposed federal government in using the militia for a posse comitatus to enforce federal law.[36] Mr. Gerry attempted compromise by suggesting a dual form of militia with concurrent powers of activation in time of emergency.[37] Governor Randolph suggested that in lieu of the dual form, no state be allowed to have any form of army or navy without the consent of the Congress, but to retain the militia under the sole direction of the Congress.[38] Mr. Gerry suggested again the dual system, saying that all the power in the federal government was dangerous; but, that there was much to be said for a uniform system of martial action.[39] Mr. George Mason suggested that the power of the purse over the army was the best safeguard.[40] The final voting on the proposals showed two states against allowing the federal government some control over the militia. Eight (including Virginia) were against allowing the appointment of officers by the federal government. Four (including Virginia) were against allowing the federal government the right of training the militia.[41] By September 17, 1787, a draft of the proposed Constitution was completed and signed by a bare majority of the convention delegates. Thus the line was drawn tautly when the delegates returned home to consider the proposed Constitution during the ratification assemblies of the various states.

Two factions soon developed: the Federalists or pro-constitutionalists, and the anti-constitutionalists. The Federalists favored the strong central form of government that the Constitution proposed, while the anti-constitutionalists were split into many splinter groups. The Federalists, led by Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, were much in favor of the militia provision. They felt that there was little fear or danger from England and Europe in the way of aggression; and, hence little need of anything greater than the militia, and the provisions for a standing army limited by the two year appropriation rule.[42] In addition the militia would never be required to travel long distances, but would be responsible only for the immediate defense.[43] The raising of a standing army would then be the solution to the relief of the militia in time of war.[44]

The Federalist's position concerning the federal control of the militia with the attendant fear of possible federal disarmament caused many long hours and days of debate in this Commonwealth. Many Virginians felt the proposed

Constitution was a government over the individual, and not a government of the several states with the supreme sovereignty vested in the citizens of the several states.[45] Without the militia there could be no strong provision for self-defense: with the militia there was the constant danger of federal disarmament--thus hung the sword of Damocles.

The Virginia debates of 1789 (in Williamsburg) touched on the militia as follows: Mr. Clay was concerned, why the Congress should have the power to call the states militia. Mr. Madison answered, showing that this was to provide for a uniform method of defense and law enforcement. Mr. George Mason expressed fear this would lead to a general harassment by the militia, with the people finally clamoring for a standing army in place of the militia. He feared having the sword and the purse in the same Congress without any separation thereof. Mr. Madison answered that we must first trust ourselves. The absence of the militia would be a better reason for the creation of the standing army so greatly feared. Mr. Clay interjected the idea of using the militia as a posse comitatus out of the militia's home state. Mr. Madison conceded that this is a necessary power of the sovereign, who must enforce the laws of the people as the final safeguard against chaos and anarchy. Mr. Henry was much more eloquent in his fears:

Pardon me if I am too jealous and suspicious to confide in this remote possibility (that the Congress would use the militia wisely). My friend (Madison) went on a supposition that the American Rulers, like all others, will not depart from their duties without bars and checks. No government can be safe without checks. Then he told us that they had no temptation to violate their duty, and that it would be to their interest to perform it. ...His supposition that they will not depart from their duty as having no interest to do so, is no answer to my mind. This is no check...the militia sir, is our ultimate safety. We can have no security without it...[46]

Mr. Henry continued to say that the final power over the militia should rest with the states; and, the federal government be without the power to disarm the militia. Mr. Nicholas pointed out that the states have at common law the power to arm the militia and that the Constitution does not take this power away. There is no pre-emption here that would be vested in the Congress. Governor Randolph mentioned the evils attendant where there is common defense without coercion as was the case under the Articles. Mr. (Chief Justice) Marshall strongly supported this reasoning.[47]

A committee was formed to consider the militia problem and to formulate a bill of rights.[48] This committee recommended the people should have the right to govern the militia through civil authority; and, the federal government would not be allowed to disarm the militia.[49] Because the assembly was under the impression that it was to be the ninth state to ratify, thus making the Constitution binding on all ratifiers, the matter of the bill of rights was agreed to be brought up later as amendments to the Constitution.[50] The final resolutions concerning the Virginia Plan bill of rights were:

That no standing army or regular troops, shall be raised, or kept up, in time of peace, without consent of two thirds of the members in both houses.[51]

That no soldier shall enlist for any longer term than four years, except in time of war, and then for no longer term than the continuance of the war.[52]

That each state, respectively shall have the power to provide for the organizing, arming, and disciplining its own militia, whensoever Congress shall omit to neglect to provide for the same. The militia shall not be subject to martial law, except when in actual service, in time of war, invasion, or rebellion; and, when not in the actual service of the United States: shall be subject only to such fines, penalties, and punishments, as shall be directed or inflicted by the laws of its own state.[53]

After a strong fight the Constitution became law and the right to bear arms, the Second Amendment, included in the Bill Rights.

THE CONSTITUTION AND JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION:

A JUDICIAL ERROR?

The Constitution of the United States provides for:

"...the Common Defense and General Welfare of the United States..."[54]

"...the Congress shall have the power...to provide for the calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrection, and repel invasion."[55]

"...to provide for the organizing, arming and disciplining the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving of the states respectively, the appointment of the officers and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress."[56]

"...to declare war..."[57]

"...to raise and support armies..."[58]

"The President shall be the Commander-in-Chief of the...militia of the several states, when called into (the) actual service of the United States."[59]

"A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to bear arms shall not be infringed."[60]

The Constitutional provisions are the core of a great deal of discussion, but very little substantive case law. Dean Roscoe Pound feels the Second Amendment to be an error in American constitutional history, and the controversy surrounding it a form of the goblin of Don Quixote chasing rifles.

...but bearing arms today is a very different thing from what it was in the days of the embattled farmers, who withstood the British in 1775. In the urban industrial society of today a general right to bear arms so as to be able to resist oppression by the Government would mean that gangs could defeat the whole Bill of Rights.[61]

It is interesting to speculate the attitude of the British toward the American revolutionary of 1775. With a minority taking part in the war, it would be nearly impossible to think the Tories regarded the revolutionary American as much more than a "gang" defeating the English bill of rights. Certainly the average Russian who is without arms could not defeat the oppression of his government, but what of America with twenty million hunting licenses issued every year?

The largest area of controversy centers around the words, "right of the people" phrase of the Second Amendment. Is this part of the Amendment separable from the militia phrase? Does this particular phrase refer to individual rights, or the rights of the state as a sovereign power? Chief Justice Story thought that the clause was not separable; that the right was that belonging to the sovereign state, not to the individual citizen of the state from which the sovereignty is evolved.[62]

The militia is the natural defense of a free country against sudden foreign invasion, and domestic insurrection, and domestic usurpation of power by rulers. It is against sound policy for a free people to keep up large standing armies...the right of the citizen to bear arms has been justly considered the palladium of the liberties...[63]

Justice Story does not consider that the militia is often controlled by the faction in power and that even with the militia usurpation may occur. The same usurpation cannot occur with the people individually holding their own personal arms.

The majority of the jurisdictions have concluded that both the United States Constitution and the various state constitutions, having a similar provision relating to the right to bear arms, refer to the militia as a whole composed and regulated by the state as it desires. The individual does not have the right to own or bear individual arms, such being a privilege not a right. [64] States holding the right to bear arms is an individual right belonging to the individuals of the state as the basis of the state's sovereign powers are in the minority.[65] In view of the Dred Scott case, this minority would appear to be the better view.[66] In Dred Scott Justice Tanney interpreted the Preamble of the Constitution to mean the powers of government flow from the individuals to form the sovereignty of the United States.[67] The government of the United States holds the power of sovereignty in a "giant trust" as granted by the individual persons that compose the citizenship of the United States.[68] There can be no reason for this principle not to apply to the several states. No state disputes the police power of

the state to prevent or limit the carrying of concealed or unusual weapons; they do dispute the general theory of a right to bear arms by the individual.[69]

Earlier decisions required that the weapons be of the type used in civilized warfare to be included under the right.[70]

One state even upheld a law preventing the carrying of any handgun except of a military type held openly in the hand.[71] Others have restricted the ownership of handguns to those of the current military type used by the armed forces.[72] Arkansas limited the right to ownership of handguns to all except police or military persons.[73] Under a Michigan Constitution that give the right to bear arms to all resident citizens for self-defense, it was held the state could not then take this right away under the guise of a game law.[74]

The Georgia courts have been more outspoken in their defense of the right to bear arms. In discussing the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States the Georgia Supreme Court said:

...does it follow, that because the people refused to delegate the right to keep and bear arms, that they (are) designed to rest in the state governments? Is this a right reserved to the states or to themselves? Is it not an inalienable right, which lies at the bottom of every free government? We do not believe that, because the people withheld this arbitrary power of disfranchisement from Congress, they intended to confer it on the local legislatures. This right is too dear to be confided to a republican legislature.[75]

This same court some years later drew a distinction between "bearing arms" and "carrying weapons". The former, "bearing arms" refers to the constitutional right to own and possess conferred upon the individual. The latter is the state granted privilege of concealing a weapon on the person.[76]

Upon its very front, as we have said, the object of the clause is declared to be to secure to the state a well regulated militia...by well settled rules for the interpretation of laws, as well as by the dictates of common sense, the object and intent is the prime purpose to its meaning. A well regulated militia may fairly mean...The arms bearing population of this state, organized under law, in possession of weapons for defending the state, and accustomed to their use. The Constitution declares that as such a militia is necessary to the existence of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed...If the general right to carry and to use them exists; if they may be at pleasure borne and used in the fields, and woods, on the highways and byways, at home and abroad, the whole declared purpose of the provision is fulfilled. The right to keep and bear arms so that the state may be secured in the existence of a well regulated militia, is fully attained.[77]

It does not follow, that in those jurisdictions that do not regard the clause as separable, and preserving the individual's right to bear arms, that the state should have the power to disarm the citizenry and render the entire militia useless to the federal government.[78] This power would be equal to that under the Articles, where each state could determine its position without regard to the nation as a whole. It would seem that the power to disarm is equal in danger to the power to remain armed. The latter power is that chosen by the Constitution. It would then appear that one is the correlative to the other: if the Federal power cannot disarm, neither can the state.

The Supreme Court of the United States passed on the right to bear arms in *Cruikshank v. U.S.*, which concerned the Reconstruction government after the War Between the States.[79] The defendants et al. had been convicted of conspiracy under the Enforcement Acts of 1870 in that they desired to feloniously injure a Negro.[80] The Supreme Court held the Second Amendment was not a limitation on the states, but was only a control on Federal powers.[81] This decision did not consider if the right to bear arms was a fundamental right possessed by all free men.

This position was affirmed several years later when the defendant was convicted of carrying a concealed weapon.[82] The states have a right under the police power to control concealment or use of unusual weapons, but the Supreme Court did not consider this position as an exception to the general theory of a right to bear arms. The position taken was a flat affirming of the *Cruikshank* principle. Arguments in later cases have failed where the defendant has contended that the right is a "privilege and immunity" under the Fourteenth Amendment.[83]

Where the violation consisted of armed marching in a parade as part of a quasi-military group without a state permit, the defendants were convicted.[84] Here was added to the Cruickshank theory the additional factor that the states control the membership in the militia. This control is without regard to any existing federal control. This viewpoint is interesting when considering that World War I and World War II brought the militia under the complete control of the federal government, and that control has remained vested therein.[85] By allowing the federal government to define the composition of the militia (National Guard) the state has lost this same power through the operation of the pre-emption theory of constitutional powers. Query, why couldn't the federal government then cause the standards of the National Guard's membership to be so defined as to eliminate the national militia? This would circumvent the construction of the Second Amendment, unless the provisions were in fact separable. Then without regard to definition there still would remain the unorganized "militia" of the individual.

The dissent in *Presser v. Illinois*, foresees the continued fight between the "arms bearing" portion of the population and the local governmental units. It also foresees the present federal control of the militia:

It is undoubtedly true that all citizens capable of bearing arms constitutes the reserved military force of the United States as well as of the states; and, in view of this prerogative of the General Government, as well as of its general powers, the states cannot, even laying the Constitutional provision out of view, prohibit the people from keeping and bearing arms, so as to deprive the United States of their rightful resources for maintaining the public security, and disable the people from performing their duty to the General Government.[86]

Another dissent, this time concerning the State of New York's Sullivan Act, which virtually disarmed the populous of the City of New York, denied the right of the state under the police power to take or render useless prior legally owned property.[87] The effect of this was to render it impossible for the honest citizen to own a handgun or purchase ammunition therefor without a police issued permit, which was not issued as a matter of course. This in effect then disarms those who should be armed, the citizen, and allows those who will break the law to remain armed. This should be a denial of the right to self-defense.

Considering that the strongest pro-right to bear arms arguments are found in the dissenting opinions, or those of certain state courts, it seems strange to hear the Supreme Court then say (concerning the right):

Simply to embody certain guarantees and immunities, which we had inherited from our English ancestors, and which had from time immemorial been subjected to certain well-recognized exceptions, arising from the necessity of the case: incorporated these into the fundamental law there was no intention of disregarding the exceptions, which continue to be recognized as if they had been formally expressed.[88]

To admit the exceptions, is to admit there must be a fundamental right from which the exception came. How can the court then deny the fundamental right and recognize the mental right and recognize the exceptions? It is apparent that this right has not been recognized, because to recognize the right would be to reverse the Cruickshank and *Presser* cases. It would appear that the Court should determine first that there is a right, not that there are exceptions to a non-existent right.

Congress has the right to delegate the authority of calling out the militia to the President in times of civil strife or insurrection.[89] This power over the militia is concurrent with that of the states.[90]

...the power over the militia by Congress being unlimited except, in the particulars of officering and training them...it may be exercised to any extent that may be deemed necessary by Congress...the power of the state government to legislate on the same subjects, having existed prior to the formation of the Constitution, and not having been prohibited by that instrument, it remains with the states, subordinated nevertheless to the paramount law of the General Government.[91]

Both Congress and the President have exercised this power quite sparingly, allowing the states the first privilege of declaring a "state of emergency" and/or martial law.[92] One of these instances was the call for troops in 1861 by President Lincoln. In this instance the troops were designated as a posse comitatus and sent into northern Virginia against Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. The Southern States did not answer this call on the ground that the states had called the militia prior to the federal call. Secondly, they were engaged in a lawful revolution, which is a basic right of all men.

During the era of Prohibition a new form of legislation appeared on the federal scene, patterned after the Harrison Anti-Narcotics Act.[93] These were the Federal Firearms Acts of 1934 and 1938, based on the power of the Congress to levy tax and regulate inter-state commerce by means of the police power.[94] These particular acts defined a "firearm" and placed certain taxes on the transfer of any weapon designated by the Act to be a "firearm".[95] These taxes (\$200) are sufficient to make transfer both expensive and traceable by police authorities. Thus the traffic in machine guns and sawed-off shotguns, the principal weapons included in the Act as "firearms" was reduced under stiff penalty of law.

This Act was sustained in *U.S. v. Adams*, as a revenue measure.[96] The District Court said that the Second Amendment did not apply to gangsters as a social group, but only to the lawful militia, of which criminals were excluded.[97] This is not stretching a point, because it is a well known theory of law that the law breaker cannot subjugate the Constitution to overcome the Constitution. You must follow the legal rules of the game of life. Gangsters are not engaged in lawful revolution from the oppression of the police state.

When the defendant contended that the tax was confiscatory and penal in nature, the Supreme Court said the Congress has the power to levy confiscatory taxes under the Constitution, provided these taxes do not interfere with the local police powers.[98] *U.S. v. Miller*, found a District Court upholding the claim that the acts deprived the defendant of his property without due process of law.[99] Here the petitioners contended, because they could lawfully possess the weapon (sawed-off shotgun) in a state, but could not transport it into another state under the act, without payment of the tax, that this was the denial of due process. The Supreme Court reversed this case and sanctioned the acts as valid exercises of the police power by taxation under the interstate commerce and directed tax provisions of the United States Constitution.[100] In reality this series of limiting laws is based on public opinion and the necessity of the times. Yet why should the honest citizen forfeit the right to own a certain type of weapon because criminals also use that type of weapon. Criminals and gangsters use motor vehicles, yet we do not limit the ownership of them. The real issue in the anti-narcotics case revolved about the fact that narcotics addiction is *contra mores bonum* or *malum in se*, with firearms there is not the same connotation, except in so far as the press is able to arouse the public. The Federal Firearms Acts are a direct result of the aroused public during the "war" between gangsters and the F.B.I. They also are the result of misguided persons who shout "there ought to be a law" every time someone is killed with a firearm. This same type of person does not pay any attention to the rising death rate on the highways. Yet would anyone deny there is a right to own a motor vehicle?

CONCLUSION

Historically, society has recognized that man has the right to preserve his own species. This is the right to repeal invasion and to resist enemy activity. Secondly, society has recognized the right of man to protect himself against his internal enemies and to preserve his own life through the right of personal self-defense. This basic ground has been enlarged to include that which society has deemed *super malum in se*; that is to include the prevention of certain felonies and the protection of certain property rights. Thirdly, society has recognized the right of man to revolt against the oppression of his political leaders. This right, the sword of the Magna Carta, has been preserved throughout the Anglo-American history of the last five hundred years. When society is able to guarantee to each member that he will have no fear of oppression, aggression, or bodily harm, then no longer will these rights be of any real legal meaning. When the reason ceases the rule should cease. Has the modern society met this responsibility? It would seem that as long as there is danger to the life of man that the society has not eliminated the right of self-defense. As long as this right lives, then also should coexist the right to bear arms, this is exoteric. Can we deny the right of self-defense and remove the ability therefor? The United States Supreme Court has admitted there are exceptions to the right to bear arms; and, then refused to recognize the right itself. Isn't this a recognition of the right, and also perhaps an understanding that the *Presser* and *Cruikshank* decisions were the children of the War Between the States and "Black Republican Reconstructionism"?

The term militia means an army of citizens; it is a collective term referring to a group of persons acting under authority as the army of the people. Why then does the Second Amendment refer to both the "militia" and the "people" if not for the very purpose of protecting the rights of both groups? Militia connotes a group, while people refers to all the group. It is very possible for a person in the militia to be of the people, in fact all persons in the militia are of the people group, but not all of the people are in the militia.

Does it not follow that the state courts would not have expended as much effort in defining the differences between a weapon and a concealed weapon if they thought that the Amendment referred only to the militia? Why did the legislatures before the Cruickshank decision expend so many terms in defining their various statutes in terms of types of weapons if they did not think that the Amendment might include the people? Why did certain states outlaw all except military handguns if they were not fearful of a declaration of unconstitutionality? The logical result is that the terms militia and people were thought to be separate in nature and preserving two distinct rights.

Why does the state have the power to disarm the Federal Government (militia) while the Federal Government does not have the same right? Is it because the states could eliminate the militia but not the right of the people to bear arms? Is it to be considered that the reason this issue did not evolve any sooner was because the "framers" of the Constitution had no idea that the state and local governments would attempt to disarm the people? That the bearing of arms for self-defense was so common that it does need a constitutional guarantee? The answer of yes to any of the above questions is a recognition of the right of all people to bear arms for their self-defense and to preserve their forms of government.

Footnotes

[1] Am. Rifleman, Jan. 1959, p. 14.

[2] Coke, Comm. 381.

[3] See for a general discussion: Pound, Constitutional Guarantees of Liberty.

[4] Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 449(A); Grimm, Teutonic Mythology 354.

[5] 1 Aelfred 27; 1 Cnut § 5(2b).

[6] 2 Eadmund 1.

[7] 1 Ine 51.

[8] See for general discussion: Burghal Hidage (circa 911-919); Chadwick, Anglo-Saxon Institutions, 207 et seq.

[9] McKechnie, Magna Charta, p. 243 (2nd ed.).

[10] Stubbs, Select, Charters, 158.

[11] 1 Richard I, Assize of Arms of 1198.

[12] Historie des ducs, 109.

[13] Magna Carta § 61; McKechnie, Magna Carta, 465 (2d ed.).

[14] 1 Stat. of Westminster c. 36; Stat. de Mil. (1 Edward 2); 3 Edward 1.

[15] 2 Edward III c.3; Bishop, Stat. Crimes, §§ 783, 784 (3rd ed.); 4 Bl. Comm. 149; Knight's Case, 3 Mod. 117; 87 Eng. Rep. 75 (1686).

[16] 22 Charles II, c. 25, § 3; 4 Bl. Comm. 150.

[17] English bill of rights, § 6; 1 William and Mary, c. 6; 5 Corbett, Parl. Hist. 110; 1 Bl. Comm. 143, 144.

[18] Id., §7.

[19] 1 Bl. Comm. 263.

[20] Stat. of Gloucester, 6 Edward I; 4 Bl. Comm. 182-188.

[21] Bracton, 3 Notebook 229, mentioning a case dating to 1234; The Case of Robert of Herthale, 1 Seldon Society Select Pleas of the Crown 31 (1203); The Case of Leonin and Jacob, 1 Seldon Society Select Pleas of the Crown 85 (1212); The Case of the Carter, 1 Seldon Society Select Pleas of the Crown 94 (1222); Anon., Fitzherbert, Grand. Abridg., C & P Co. no. 284 (1328); 21, Edward III, c. 17.

[22] 24 Henry VIII, c. 5.

[23] 1 Hale P.C. 487; 1 East P.C. 272 (1803).

[24] Firearms Acts of 1940; 10 & 11 George V, c. 43.

[25] The various royal charters and grants all provided for the common law, "...not repugnant to the realm of Englande..."; Massachusetts (1626); Rhode Island (1663); Connecticut (1662); New York (1664); New Jersey (charter date is unknown); Pennsylvania (1681); Delaware (1701); Maryland (1701); Virginia (1606); North Carolina (1663); South Carolina (1712); and, Georgia (1732). N.B., The original boundaries of these colonies are not always the boundaries of the present state, and in some instances composed several present states. See also, Zenger's Case, 1 Chand. (N.Y.) Am. Crim. Trials, 151 (1734); Paxton's Case, Massachusetts (1761); In Re Stamp Act, Virginia (1776).

[26] Va. Code, § 1-11 (1950).

[27] 3 Henn. Stat. 131 (Virginia); 3 Henn. Stat. 338 (Virginia); 4 Anne § 23.

[28] Longfellow, inscription on the base of the statue of The Minuteman, Concord, Massachusetts.

[29] U.S. Const. art. 1, § 8, cls. 10, 11, 15, and 16; art. 2, § 2.

[30] Federalist Papers, no. 8 (Hamilton).

[31] 2 Story, Comm. 265 (1833 ed.).

[32] Adams, A Defense of the Constitution 392 (1787 ed.).

[33] 2 Story, Comm. 607 (1851 ed.). See also, 1 Tucker's Bl. Comm. App. 299, 300; Rawle, On the Const., ch. 10, p. 125; 2 Lloyd's Debates, 219-220.

[34] Virginia Bill of Rights of 12 May 1776, §13; 2 Poore, Const. 1909 (1877 ed.); Note this provision is still carried in the Virginia Constitution to date: Va. Const., 29 June 1776, 2 Poore, Const. 1911; Va. Const., 1850, 2 Poore, Const. 1920, 1931; Va. Secession Const., 1861; 2 Poore, Const. 1947; Va. Const., 1864, 2 Poore 1947; Va. Const., 1870, 2 Poore 1954, 1968; Va. Const. 1902, Va. Code v. 9.

[35] 5 Elliot, Debates, 127 (1845 ed.).

[36] *Id.* 172.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] *Id.*, 205; See also, U.S. Const., Art I, §10, cl. 3.

[39] *Id.*, 440.

[40] *Id.*, 443.

[41] *Id.*, 446.

[42] 3 Story, Comm. 297 (1833 ed.); See also, Federalist Papers, numbers 24, 35.

[43] 3 Story, Comm. 1196 (1833 ed.).

[44] 3 Story, Comm. 297 (1833 ed.).

[45] Adams, A Defense of the Constitution, 296 (1797 ed.); U.S. Const., Art. I, § 10, cl. 2.

[46] 3 Elliot, Debates, 385 (1836 ed.).

[47] See, 3 Eliot, Debates, 378-459 (1836 ed.). for a transcription of the debates.

[48] The committee included: Geo. Wythe, Geo. Washington, Geo. Madison, Gov. Randolph, and John Marshall; 3 Elliot, Debates 656.

[49] 3 Elliot, Debates 678 (1836 ed.).

[50] New Hampshire ratified on June 21, 1788, three days before Virginia on June 24, 1788; 3 Elliot, Debates 657.

[51] 3 Elliot, Debates 660, § 9.

[52] 3 Elliot, Debates 660, § 10.

[53] 3 Elliot, Debates 660, § 11.

[54] U.S. Const., Art. I, § 8.

[55] U.S. Const., Art. I, § 8, cl. 15.

[56] U.S. Const., Art. I, § 8, cl. 16.

[57] U.S. Const., Art. I, § 8, cl. 10.

[58] U.S. Const., Art. I, § 8, cl. 11.

[59] U.S. Const., Art. 2, § 2.

[60] U.S. Const., Second Amendment.

[61] Pound, Development of Constitutional Guarantees of Liberty 91.

[62] 2 Story, Comm. 605 (1855 ed.); 1 Tucker's Bl. Comm. App. 299, 300; 2 Lloyd's Debates 219, 220.

[63] 2 Story, Comm. 607 (1855 ed.).

[64] *State v. Buzzard* 4 Ark. 18 (1843); *Aymette v. State*, 2 Humphr. (Tenn.) 154 (1891); *State v. Workman*, 35 W. Va. 367, 14 S.E. 9 (1891).

[65] *Nunn v. State*, 1 Ga. 243 (1846); *State v. Kerner*, 181 N.C. 574, 107 S.E. 222 (1921); *Andrews v. State*, 3 Heisk (1871).

[66] *The Dred Scott Case*, 19 How. (U.S.) 393 (1857).

[67] *Id.* at 397.

[68] *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 4 Wheat (U.S.) 316 (1819); *Chisholm v. Georgia*, 2 Dall (U.S.) 419 (1783).

[69] *State v. Reid*, 1 Ala. 612 (1840); *State v. Mitchell*, 3 Blackfrd. (Ind.) 229 (1833); *State v. Buzzard*, 4 Ark. 18 (1839); *Nunn v. State*, 1 Ga. 243 (1846).

[70] *Salina v. Blaksley*, 72 Kan. 230; 83 Pac. 619 (1905); *State v. Smith*, 11 La. Ann. 633 (1856); *Pierce v. State*, 42 Okla. Cr. 272, 275 p. 393 (1929); *English v. State*, 35 Tex. 473 (1872); *Ex parte Thomas*, 21 Okla. 770, 97 p. 260 (1910).

[71] *State v. Wilburn*, 7 Baxt. (Tenn.) 57 (1856).

[72] *Page v. State*, 3 Heisic. (Tenn.) 198 (1871); *State v. Reid*, 1 Ala. 612 (1840); *Glenn v. State*, 10 Ga. App. 128, 72 S.E. 927 (1911); *State v. Jummel*, 13 La. Ann. 399 (1858); *Comm. v. Murphy*, 166 Mass. 171, 44 N.E. 138 (1896); *Contra: In re Brinkley*, 8 Idaho 597, 70 P. 609 (1902); *Bliss v. Comm.*, 2 Litt. (Ky.) 90 (1822). Note: The latter two cases allowed some regulation but not abolition.

[73] *Haide v. State*, 4 Turner (Ark.) 564 (1882).

[74] *People v. Zerillo*, 219 Mich. 635, 189 N.W. 927 (1922).

[75] *Nunn v. State*, 1 Ga. 243, 250 (1846).

[76] *Hill v. State*, 53 Ga. 472, 475 (1874).

[77] *Id.* at 475, 476.

[78] *Nunn v. State* 1 Ga. 243 (1846).

[79] *U.S. v. Cruickshank, et al.*, 92 U.S. (2 Otto) 425, 23 L. Ed. 588 (1876).

[80] 16 Stat. 140 (1870).

[81] *U.S. v. Cruickshank*, *supra*; *Barron v. City of Baltimore*, 7 Pet. (U.S.) 250 (1835); *Fox v. Ohio*, 5 How. (U.S.) 434 (1840); *Lessee of Livingston v. Moore*, 7 Pet. (U.S.) 551 (1836); *Smith v. Maryland*, 18 How. (U.S.) 76 (1856); *Withers v. Buckley*, 20 How. (U.S.) 90 (1860); *Pervear v. Comm.*, 5 Wall. (U.S.) 479 (1862); *Twitchell v. Comm.* 7 Wall (U.S.) 321 (1864); *Edwards v. Elliot*, 21 Wall (U.S.) 557 (1867).

[82] *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, 118 U.S. 356, 6 S. Ct. 1065, 30 L.Ed. 320 (1886); *Patsone v. Penn.*, 232 U.S. 138, 34 S. Ct. 281, 58 L. Ed. 539 (1913); *Miller v. Texas*, 153 U.S. 535, 38 L.Ed. 812 (1893); *Brown v. Walker*, 161 U.S. 591, 16 S. Ct. 644, 40 L.Ed. 819 (1896).

[83] *U.S. v. Cruickshank*, *supra*.

[84] *Presser v. Ill.*, 116 U.S. 252, 6 S. Ct. 580, 29 L. Ed. 615 (1885).

[85] 39 Stat. 166 (1916); 61 Stat. 191 (1947).

[86] *Presser v. Ill.*, 116 U.S. 252, 256, 6 S. Ct. 580, 585, 29 L.Ed. 615, 619.

[87] *People ex rel Darling v. Board of Wardens, City Prison*, 154 N.Y. App. Div. 413 (1913). See also, *Fredrich, Pistol*

Regulations, 23 J.C.L.; C. & P.S. 531.

[88] Robertson v. Baldwin, 165 U.S. 275, 281, 17 S.Ct. 326, 329, 41 L.Ed. 715, 717 (1899).

[89] 1 Stat. 424 (1785); Martin v. Mott, 12 Wheat. (U.S.) 19, 32 (1827).

[90] Moore v. Houston, 3 S. & R.(Penn.) 169 (1817); Houston v. Moore, 5 Wheat (U.S.) 1 (1820).

[91] Houston v. Moore, *supra* 16.

[92] Whiskey Rebellion of 1792, under 1 Stat. 264 (1792); Embargo Acts of 1808 under 1 Stat. 264 (1792), 1 Stat. 424 (1795), 2 Stat. 443 (1807); Lincoln's Call of Apr. 15, 1861, 12 Stat. 281 (1861), 12 Stat. (App.) 1258 (1861).

[93] Harrison Anti-Narcotics Act, held to be a constitutional grant of the taxing power as a police power over interstate commerce in, U.S. v. Doremus, 249 U.S. 86, 39 S.Ct. 214, 62 L.Ed. 493 (1919).

[94] National Firearms Act of 1934, 48 Stat. 1236 (1934); National Firearms Act of 1938, 48 Stat. 1237 (1938); See also, 1939 Internal Rev. Code, 15 U.S.C. § 902 et seq.; See also, 1954 Internal Rev. Code, 26 U.S.C. § 5848.

[95] The tax levied is at the rate of \$200, to be paid by the transferor, both parties are liable for the payment. Under certain exceptions where the weapon is included within the meaning of the Act, but is deemed to be for collectors, the tax is \$1.

[96] Generally included in the term "firearm" are all weapons capable of firing more than one shot with each pull of the trigger (machine and sub-machine guns), any rifle or shotgun with a barrel length of under 18 inches in length. Thus mainly concealed rifles and shotguns are included in the term.

[97] U.S. v. Adams, 11 F. Supp. 216 (D.Ct., Fla. 1935).

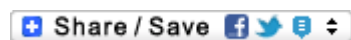
[98] U.S. v. Adams, *supra*; U.S. v. Tot., 28 F. Supp., 900 (D.Ct., N.J. 1935); State v. Workman, 35 W. Va. 365, 14 S.E. 9 (1891); Hill v. State, 53 Ga. 472 (1874); Civil Rights cases, 109 U.S. 3, 3 S.Ct. 18, 27 L.Ed. 835 (1869); Robertson v. Baldwin, 165 U.S. 275, 17 S. Ct. 356, 41 L.Ed. 715 (1899).

[99] U.S. v. Miller, 26 F. Supp. 1002 (D. Ct. Ark. 1935).

[100] U.S. v. Miller, 307 U.S. 174, 59 S.Ct. 816, 83 L.Ed. 1206 (1939). See also, Sonzinsky v. U.S., 300 U.S. 506, 57 S.Ct. 554, 87 L.Ed. 772 (1937).

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Thursday, June 24, 2010

James Ostrowski: The Myth of Political Consent

The Myth of Political Consent

by James Ostrowski [article link](#)

June 24, 2010 | LewRockwell

This is an excerpt from [Direct Citizen Action: How We Can Win the Second American Revolution Without Firing a Shot](#).

Permit me to digress into a discussion of the meaning of political consent and its withdrawal. I am not saying that the American people ever explicitly consented to be ruled by the regime on the Potomac, or that they are parties to some mysterious Social Contract that implies their consent. That is all utter nonsense and propaganda. I know I never consented to be ruled by a regime that I have strongly opposed since my teenage years. Nor have I ever signed a Social Contract allowing them to rule over me. I'd be a jackass if I had.

To the best of my knowledge, no living American ever signed a contract to be ruled by the creepy politicians in DC. There are people long dead who signed a proposed Constitution and there are 1179 [1] people long dead who voted at state conventions to ratify the Constitution. However, no living American ever agreed to be bound by the consent to be governed apparently given by people long dead that they did not know.

Libertarian legal scholar Randy Barnett has brilliantly refuted all possible theories of how citizens can be found to have implicitly consented to be ruled when it is perfectly obvious that they have not explicitly consented. See, [Restoring the Lost Constitution](#) (2004), pp. 11 et seq.

Voting does not imply consent as we never get to vote on the legitimacy of the regime itself. And what if you vote against the regime as I have done in every election since I was allowed to vote? How in the world can that be construed as consent? Well, I played the game. Okay, so if I stop voting, I have withdrawn my consent? That's a bargain! I will stop voting, withdraw my consent and the tax bills will cease. Hurray! Yeah, but you could have played the game, they will say. Barnett replies: "It is a queer kind of 'consent' where there is no way to refuse one's consent." (p. 16). Barnett goes on to demolish all the familiar rationalizations for why average citizens have "consented" to be governed by political thugs in DC:

1. Residency – this argument "presupposes that those who demand that you leave already have authority over you." (p. 18) It's a circular argument.
2. Acquiescence to the laws. "Does one really manifest a consent to obey the commands of someone much more powerful simply because one does not physically resist the threat of violence for noncompliance?" (p. 21)
3. Acceptance of the regime. This proves too much, according to Barnett. Even oppressive regimes have the passive acceptance of their people in the sense they do not actively revolt.
4. Acceptance of benefits. This is the most common argument made by liberals these days. With respect to the alleged benefits of the state's legal system, Barnett simply notes that there can be no consent since there is no way to opt out. The argument from receipt of tangible "benefits" also fails. These are paid for by compulsory taxes you never consented to. Only if such things as roads, schools, and fire protection were funded voluntarily, could you be said to have consented to the regime by using them. That never happened of course. Also, again, to consent, there must be a reasonable way not to consent. If I refuse to use the streets, I die of starvation. It's a distorted view of consent that leads to the "argument": join us or die!

Thus, we the living never consented to the current regime in the first place in any meaningful way. Thus, what I am proposing is this: we need to make explicit what is already implicit. We need to announce that we do not accept the legitimacy of the regime. This regime is blatantly, openly and proudly violating our natural rights. It is not legitimate within the clear understanding of our founding document, the Declaration of Independence. Thus, you have no moral obligation to

support it. Withdrawing moral support for the regime is critical since public support is the very basis of the regime's power. That is why government schools are so critical to the maintenance of the regime's power. And that is why even totalitarian regimes have elaborate propaganda operations.

I emphasize again that I do not advocate civil disobedience. Why engage in risky and costly law-breaking when we can take America back through lawful and peaceful means?

If the regime begins to unambiguously violate its own constitution, then it becomes the practitioner of civil disobedience and the people will have a moral and legal right to resist as I explain further in Chapter 20.

[Note]

In 14 states including Vermont.

James Ostrowski is an attorney in Buffalo, New York and author of [Government Schools Are Bad for Your Kids: What You Need to Know](#) and [Political Class Dismissed: Essays Against Politics, Including "What's Wrong With Buffalo."](#) His latest book is [Direct Citizen Action: How We Can Win the Second American Revolution Without Firing a Shot](#). See his [website](#).

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Vijay Prashad: The G20 and the Planet

Global Bonapartism: The G20 and the Planet

by Prof. Vijay Prashad [article link](#)

June 24, 2010 | Global Research

We are left with the politicians who think poorly of us, and who stand back with chaos in their pale old eyes whimpering, "That is not what we wanted. No, it was not to have gone that way." They are old, but we have been very ill, and cannot yet send them away. — Bertram Warr (1917-1943).

When the Finance Ministers of the Advanced States set up the G7 in 1974-75, their tongues quivered with the taste of centuries of power. The Soviet Union had begun its plummet into obsolescence. Its collapse was held off by a decade through the rise of oil prices and the cannibalization of the remarkable achievements of an earlier generation. The Third World had threatened the established order with its demand for a New International Economic Order (1973), but that would quickly be dispatched through financial trickery, one that led directly to the massive debt crisis of the 1980s and the inflation of the power of Wall Street, the City of London and the Frankfurt Finanzplatz. No rivals stood in the way of the G7. The European and Japanese Ministers happily bound their economies into dollar seigniorage, with the euro and the yen now secondary currencies in the world of international settlements. The United States was the leading edge. Its wingmen stood around: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom. Everyone beamed. The future was theirs.

Like Achilles, the G7 not only killed its Hector, the hopes of the rest of the planet, but it now tied the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America behind its chariot and dragged it across the battlefield. Structural adjustment conditionalities, aerial bombardment: this was the loot and pillage of the era that opened up in 1975.

In late June, the G7 (with Russia, the G8) will meet in Toronto, Canada. This is its 33rd official gathering; it might be its final one. Alongside the G8, Canada will also host the G20. The G20 was formed in 1999 at the initiative of the “locomotives of the South,” the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), South Africa (who joins them in another iteration, the IBSA – India, Brazil and South Africa) and Mexico. A smart fellow at Goldman Sachs coined the acronym BRIC, but it has stuck, and it means more than that quaint sounding term from the 1990s, “emerging economies.” The G20 began as a “mechanism for informal dialogue.” Circumstances favored a greater role: the global financial crisis from 2008 onward opened the door. The “advanced” economies turned for consideration to their creditors among the BRIC states. This moment of crisis pushed the G20 to ask for more than an informal status. At the 2009 G20 Summit in Pittsburgh, the eminences pledged, “Today, we designated the G20 as the premier forum for our international economic cooperation.”

The Road to the High Table

Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom are the least pleased with the demise of the G8, since this has been their major platform to assert their otherwise declined global presence (this applies in particular to Japan, which has seen its influence decline relative to the rise of China’s authority). Because of these powers, the G8 might continue to meet, but it will not be able to act as the executive committee of the G20. The others might not allow that. They can see the benefit of having China in the room, and India and Brazil. Keep your friends close, is the theory, but your enemies closer.

Since the 1950s, it has been the effort of the Atlantic states to squash the march of political progress in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Independent political action was frowned upon. The Dulles brothers felt that all this talk of “non-alignment” was simply a Trojan Horse for Bolshevism. [John Foster Dulles](#) shared bugbears with Winston Churchill. Both were obsessed with Communism, what Dulles called “godless terrorism.” One can imagine John Foster chuckling as Churchill says, “The failure to strangle Bolshevism at its birth and to bring Russia, then prostrate, by one means or another, into the general democratic system, lies heavy upon us today” (1949). If Russia finally entered the G7, and, despite its occasional bouts of independent thinking, went along with the Atlantic powers, the countries of the Third World project were less pliable. Even when they give themselves over to the broad outlines of the Atlantic project, they still do things that are unacceptable: as when Turkey and Brazil cut the deal with Iran on nuclear fuel.

Unwilling to be fully servile, the “locomotives of the South” have tried to make the most of differences among the G7 to edge their way onto the table. The weak link was France’s Nicolas Sarkozy. In 2003, the French had already invited the Plus Five countries (Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa) to the [Evian Summit of the G8](#). At the next two summits (Gleneagles, 2005, and Heilingendamm, 2007) the G7 leaders spoke timidly of trying to “institutionalize the dialogue.” The Plus Five saw this as insufficient. Shortly after his installation as France’s President in 2007, Sarkozy put the case for the Plus Five. It was his Gaullist moment, to create some daylight between the Anglo-Saxon attack on Iraq and France’s “benign” colonial history.

In January 2008, at a meeting in Delhi, Sarkozy told business leaders, “At the G8 summit, eight countries meet for two and a half days and on the third day invite five developing nations – Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa – for discussions over lunch. This is injustice to 2.5 billion inhabitants of these nations. Why this third grade treatment to them? I want that the next G8 summit be converted into a G13 summit.” Sarko’s indignation stops at his borders. The third-grade treatment is acceptable to the racaille in the [banlieues](#), but not to the leadership of their homelands.

The Plus Five states wanted a formal role in the G8, but that was not all. There is an old, unaddressed demand from them to bring democracy to the UN Security Council, where only five powers have a permanent seat and a veto (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States). India, Brazil and South Africa, in particular, have called for regional representation – another Asian state, a South American one and an African one. The call has fallen on deaf ears.

The other important demand has been for democracy in the IMF and the World Bank, two institutions that are dominated by the Europeans and the United States. As the country with vast surpluses, China has made the loudest noises, in the most

genial way, for greater voting power in the IMF. At the Pittsburg meeting of the G20 in 2009, the powers gave the nod to open up the vote share in the IMF (the United States has the largest block of votes, 17 per cent, while China now has the sixth largest, with 3.7 per cent). “The voices of those countries is underrepresented, and their economies are developing very rapidly. If those facts are not adequately reflected, the IMF will not be able to maintain its credibility and legitimacy,” said Sadakazu Tanigaki the Japanese Finance Minister in 2006 (he is now the leader of the opposition Liberal Democratic Party, and likely Prime Minister if the LDP comes back to power).

Entry into the Executive Committee of the IMF, which is what has been gained, is of little value. It barely takes any decisions. It is a sleepy sinecure for Central Bank officials who are near retirement. The IMF’s Independent Evaluation Office report from 2008 acknowledges this. In 2007, the German Minister of Finance, Peter Steinbrück, told the International Monetary and Financial Committee that Germany would advocate for “fair representation” based on “relative weight in the global economy.” The problem is how one calculates that. The Indian Finance Minister P. Chidambaram felt that if GDP is the gold standard, then it must be converted using purchasing power parities. To quote Aerosmith, dream on.

The Lehman collapse provided the spur to bring the Plus Five to the high table. But the push for institutional reform predates the financial crisis. It comes from an earlier tradition, one articulated in the 1990 South Commission Report, *The Challenge of the South*, to push the locomotives to the front and hope that they will not ignore the challenges of the rest of the African, Asian and Latin American states, as well as the needs of the working peoples of the North. That was the game plan. The seats are now occupied, but it is unlikely that those who occupy them have either the subjective or objective pressures to champion the disposable peoples of the planet.

Capitalist Revisionism

The G20 met in Pittsburg when it appeared possible that global capitalism might implode. Talk of global Keynesianism was in the air, and it looked like neoliberalism was on its knees. The final communiqué from Pittsburg did not disguise its true intentions, which was to use the stimulus to get over the slump and then return to business as usual. “We will avoid any premature withdrawal of surplus,” the eminences wrote, “at the same time, we will prepare our exit strategies and, when the time is right, withdraw our extraordinary policy support in a cooperative and coordinated way, maintaining our commitment to fiscal responsibility.” There is nothing here to indicate a fundamental course correction.

A real alternative was proposed in the UN Conference at the Highest Level on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development (June 1-3, 2009). It was a gasp from the UN Left – pushed by the General Assembly’s President Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann and organized by former World Bank lead economist Joseph Stiglitz. They drew their judgment from an October 2008 panel that included India’s Prabhat Patnaik, Japan’s Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and Kenya’s Calestous Juma. In April 2009, the Commission of Experts put out a set of recommendations. The text is 18 pages long. It called for the discussion to return to the G-192 (the UN), and conduct a colonoscopy of the financial system. It is now available from the New Press as [The Stiglitz Report](#) (Spring 2010).

The finance ministers of the G20, called the sherpas, met in Busan, South Korea earlier this month to create the agenda and draft documents for the G20 summit. The ministers met in the lush Paradise Hotel. They told the press that it was time for austerity. Yoon Jeung-Hyun, South Korea’s Minister for Strategy and Finance, led the charge. In 1992, he had pushed South Korea’s capital market liberalization. Yoon is a veteran not only of crisis creation, but also of crisis management (when South Korea begged the IMF and its creditors for leeway in the J. P. Morgan building in 1997). The Pusan text was interpreted by Yoon, “The recent events highlight the importance of sustainable public finances and the need for our countries to put in place credible, growth-friendly measures, to deliver fiscal sustainability, differentiated for and tailored to national circumstances. Those countries with serious fiscal challenges need to accelerate the pace of consolidation.” The keyword here is “consolidation,” which in the argot of the financiers means the reduction of government deficits and debt accumulation. Or, in almost popular language, the Pusan sherpas called for austerity.

The Greek financial meltdown provided the lesson. That Goldman Sachs had colluded with the Greek ruling elite to enable and mask its debt was not the issue. The lesson from the Greek debacle was that European countries had to hastily bring down their deficits. These deficits had to now be paid for not by higher taxes on the rich (or even more effective tax collection on extant rates), but by cuts in government social spending and on effective taxations of all kinds on the

working-class. The consumption of the elite could not be touched, but the consumption of the poor, low as it is, is going to be curtailed. The newly elected Conservatives in the UK hastened to slash government spending, with the Conservative leader, David Cameron, telling his fellows to change their “whole way of life.”

Angela Merkel’s German conservatives were not far behind with their cuts; this after Merkel forced the Greeks to wield their own hatchet. An 80-billion euro cut will start the process, with more in the wings. “The direction is the right one,” said an editorial in Bild, “The government is saving money on items it no longer wants to afford and that can only be financed through debt. Every private individual would do the same with his finances. The program isn’t heartless.” Actually, the program is brutal.

During the Pusan meeting, the IMF’s Dominique Strauss-Kahn went to Spain to validate the austerity program of Prime Minister Zapatero. Both are socialists. Strauss-Kahn is the presumptive Socialist candidate for the 2012 election. He was the architect of the privatization program that doomed the last socialist government (led by Lionel Jospin). Zapatero is going to cut 15-billion euros from his budget. Spain is “moving in absolutely the right direction,” anointed Strauss-Kahn. The new policies are a “shot in the arm.” Even Merkel expressed her “full confidence in Spain.” Not so the workers, who mimic their Greek comrades on the Spanish streets.

Obama sent his encyclical to the G20. He worried that Europe was too hasty in the turn to austerity. Obama cannot afford to follow them. He has neither the political capital nor the political will. In the past, he wrote, the “stimulus was too quickly withdrawn and resulted in renewed hardships and recession.” Obama wants “credible plans,” which means another route. He cannot afford to be outside, what David Cameron called, “the international mainstream” of debt management. It would look awkward.

Less awkward for Obama is to blame China. That is now an established art in Washington. The current theme is to demand that China devalue its currency, and thereby administer a reduction of its surplus dollars. There is a demand that the Chinese government needs to push policies that increase domestic consumption and reduce its domestic saving rate. The Chinese need to be made into consumers. They are too thrifty. Currently the personal consumption of the vast Chinese population is only 16 per cent of that of the U. S. population. If the Chinese were to become America, imagine the ecological stress. The champion of “green capitalism” has not thought that through.

Hu Jintao is a crafty politician. To forestall U. S. criticism, the Chinese have loosened the yuan’s peg to the dollar. It will not do what Washington wants, but it will allow Hu to claim he has done what he can and yet do little. Beijing promised as much in April, before Hu’s visit to Washington. Little came of it. The Chinese are equally unprepared to slow down on the stimulus – at \$585-billion, it allowed the Chinese economy to grow by 8.7 per cent last year. To manage the unrest in the country, the leadership has looked the other way during strike action against some of the export-processing firms. Hu has his own problems. He won’t be Obama’s sherpa.

At Toronto, the main card will be Obama vs. Merkel. What the newly enfranchised G20 will do is unclear. It has a place at the table, but it has none of the vision of the Bolivarians (Venezuela wants to close down the IMF, and Ecuador has defaulted on the Odious Debts). Neither do the “locomotives of the South” have an agenda in common. Will they be spectators, watching Obama and Merkel circle each other, or will they offer a third way, perhaps putting forward a few of the proposals from the Stiglitz Report? I put my money on them being spectators, but I’d love to be wrong. •

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Robert C. Koehler: Beyond Petroleum

Beyond Petroleum

by Robert C. Koehler [article link](#)

June 24, 2010 | CommonDreams

You couldn't call it a dialogue. It was more like a momentary rip in the global power continuum, a spill of outrage on the stage of a major oil conference in London.

On Tuesday, two Greenpeace activists interrupted a speech by British Petroleum chief of staff Steve Westwell — sandwiched him at his podium, trespassed on time and space that didn't belong to them, and spoke to an audience that hadn't come to hear them. They had about 20 seconds, not much time to talk about the complexity of ecosystems or draw attention, say, to the plight of the Gulf of Mexico's Sargassum algae. They did the best they could.

One unfurled a banner that read "Go Beyond Petroleum." The other, as she was being ushered off the stage and out of the hotel, shouted, "We need to speed up progress and make a push to end the oil age."

That was it. Time's up. That's how protest is — shouted and emotional, sometimes illegal. Even when it's videotaped and the world gets to witness those 20 seconds of public theater, all we hear are slogans, all we see are disruption and scuffle: disorder, quickly dealt with. Money gets its hair mussed a little, then returns to its agenda. Nothing seems to change. The disorder implicit in that agenda returns to "let our children worry about it" status, and we remain on the track described by Ronald Wright in *A Short History of Progress*, his investigation into why civilizations collapse:

"The concentration of power at the top of large-scale societies gives the elite a vested interest in the status quo; they continue to prosper in darkening times long after the environment and general populace begin to suffer."

As though still on the podium with the BP exec, I claim a little more time to open up that Greenpeace slogan, to address its implications not in the abstract but in the presence of those who profit from our stagnation within the oil age, whatever that might mean. After all, it's their future too.

For it to matter whether or not we move "beyond petroleum," there has to be a spiritual, not just a technical, dimension to the concept. It implies, I think, a fundamental break with the domination impulse by which we have "tamed" nature over the millennia of recorded history and built our unstable civilizations, propped up by war and conquest. Moving beyond petroleum means moving beyond our uncritical acceptance of a fragmented world and fragmented sense of responsibility.

Indeed, it means moving beyond the gospel that competing fragments, each looking out for its own "self-interest" (a.k.a., capitalism), is the highest form of order we can hope for. Rep. Joe Barton of Texas, the highest-ranking Republican on the House energy committee, demonstrated the sham nature of this system last week, when he apologized to BP for the \$20 billion escrow account President Obama ordered the company to establish, calling it a "shakedown."

Turns out, A) "Of the five Gulf Coast states, Mr. Barton's Texas is the only one whose beaches, fisheries and tourist haunts are not threatened by oil spewing from BP's ruined well," the New York Times reported; and B) "... the oil and gas industry have been Mr. Barton's biggest source of campaign money ... contributing \$1.4 million since the 1990 election cycle," the Times added.

At the very least, capitalism in its unregulated, most virulent form — fragmentation capitalism, you might say — which was set loose in the Reagan era, has to be contained. No small task. U.S. District Judge Martin Feldman, a Reagan appointee (with stockholder interest in the drilling industry), recently overturned Obama's six-month moratorium on new deepwater drilling in the Gulf (which would affect operations at 33 of 3,600 sites), siding with the argument that one blown deepwater well is "no proof" the others constitute a threat — no matter that the consequences of another accident would be cataclysmic.

The decision is proof of the status-quo aversion to long-range thinking — or thinking that goes “beyond petroleum,” thinking that muddies the profit game with ethical, moral and ecological concerns.

The “no proof” argument has long been the dodge of last resort for polluters, whether corporate or governmental. For instance, the U.S. Department of Defense — the biggest polluter on the planet and supreme enforcer of the global status quo — maintained, as long as possible, that there was no proof the mystery illnesses Vietnam vets (not to mention the Vietnamese themselves) were suffering had anything to do with Agent Orange. Ditto, Gulf War Syndrome. Irrefutable proof takes decades to accumulate; in fragmentation capitalism, the aim of the game is to take advantage of this and avoid responsibility for as long as possible.

Beyond petroleum, beyond the short-sighted exploitation and fragmentation of the planet, there is life itself, awaiting our discovery in its ever-unfolding complexity. Beyond petroleum lies the human future, at peace with itself, at peace with the planet, secure in its context and evolving toward whatever comes after us.

We have to start growing up. This won’t be easy, of course. Getting there will require a concerted, planetary effort, and the ascendance of values – reverence, humility, love – bigger than the ones that drive the age of oil.

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Too Many Think BP Should Get a Pass

by Pat LaMarche [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 23, 2010 | Bangor Daily News (Maine) | CommonDreams

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Zach Carter: The Bank Lobby Gets Desperate on Derivatives

The Bank Lobby Gets Desperate on Derivatives

By Zach Carter [article link](#)

June 23, 2010 | AlterNet

Astonishingly, as Wall Street reform enters its final hours a tired, generic corporate refrain against regulation is gaining traction. As bigwig bankers and their lobbyist brethren fight to defeat tough new rules on derivatives—the crazy casino that brought down AIG—all their sloganeers can come up with is the trite wail that serious rules will send this risky business overseas. It’d be funny if members of Congress weren’t taking it seriously.

“Oh no—the business will go overseas!” is the last-ditch, we’re-about-to-lose-this-one cry of despair for corporate executives in every industry. Crack down on a profitable abuse in the United States, and the entire business will move to London or Mumbai, sending jobs and tax revenue abroad with it— or so the argument goes. You only hear this line when CEOs know they have no case, and have to divert attention away from the real substance of the policy debate. In the case of Wall Street abuses, this nonsense is especially ridiculous. The bank lobby really just doesn’t have any good arguments to launch in its favor, so it’s falling back on generic corporate jargon.

In reality, the U.S. has extremely broad authority to crack down on derivatives activity abroad, we just don’t have a whole lot of good rules on derivatives for regulators to enforce. It’s extremely difficult for financial institutions to simply offshore their risky derivatives business to avoid oversight. Under current law, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission has the authority to regulate any trading done by foreign firms on behalf of U.S. clients, any trading of U.S. assets conducted by

foreign institutions and any trading that causes a “substantial disruption” in U.S. markets. Just about anything the CFTC wants to get its hands on, it can, and the current CFTC Chairman, Gary Gensler, is a committed reformer. We just need to write good rules for his agency to enforce.

Moreover, finance tricksters will have no incentive to move their destructive derivatives trading abroad, because the rules in other countries are, in fact, much tougher than those the U.S. is currently considering.

There are a lot of ways to crack down on Wall Street, but none of them will work without reining in the insane, secretive market for derivatives—speculative instruments that allow financiers to gamble on anything from subprime mortgages to the price of corn. Right now Wall Street is making a big push to roll-out new derivatives on movie box-office receipts, allowing the financial world to place raw bets on how much money a movie is going to make. It sounds crazy and destructive, and it is.

Germany is leading the way on derivatives reform by simply banning this kind of naked gambling outright. The U.S. effort is critically important, but much more modest. Instead of banning the casino, reformers in Congress are hoping to shrink it [by ending the taxpayer subsidies that fuel it](#). This is at the heart of the proposal from Sen. Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., that has earned so much ire from the bank lobby. Bankers love their taxpayer subsidies, and love converting them into bonuses—who wouldn’t? The trouble is that this business is inherently risky, and can jeopardize the entire economy, as the collapse of AIG attests.

But ending subsidies is still not as strong as banning gambling, which Germany is doing. [The entire European Union is currently making a move to follow Germany’s lead](#). Businesses can’t exit U.S. markets to skirt regulations if their Wild West trading schemes are outlawed everywhere else.

In the U.K., officials are poised to impose [a hefty tax on all financial assets](#), preventing banks from ballooning their balance sheets with derivatives trades. That means, U.S. banks can’t send their derivatives operations to the U.K. without paying a big price.

Outside of Europe, few nations have the financial infrastructure to support derivatives trading on the scale of what we currently have in the U.S., where \$300 trillion in trades are housed at just five banks. Some Asian nations do have this kind of infrastructure, big financial firms in Asia all realize that they will have to comply with U.S. rules [if they want to keep doing business in the U.S.](#) And indeed, [policymakers in Hong Kong and other financial centers are looking to the U.S. for leadership](#) on derivatives, and are likely to mimic whatever reforms are adopted here.

But more broadly, we have to ask why the U.S. should be worried about this activity being offshored at all. Raw gambling by financial institutions brought on one of the greatest economic catastrophes in American history. It forced the government to pony up over \$4 trillion in bailout funds, [expanded the national debt by 40 percent](#), and killed over 8 million jobs. If this business goes overseas, so be it! Let other nations bailout their megabanks and wreck their own economies if they want to. Today’s derivatives casino is a job-killing nightmare that produces nothing other than megabonuses for bankers. Taxpayers have no business subsidizing such economic destruction.

Compared to international efforts, Blanche Lincoln’s derivatives bill is overpoweringly mild, but it remains the only serious attempt to rein in the speculative casino that crashed our economy. The fact that the bank lobby’s only tactic left is the wail “offshore!” shows how desperate our bank executives have become. Congress has no business caving to such nonsense at this stage of the reform process.

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Wednesday, June 23, 2010

Martin Hutchinson: Back To The Kaiser's World

Back To The Kaiser's World

by Martin Hutchinson [article link](#)

June 21, 2010 | The Bear's Lair

As anyone who has played "Diplomacy" knows, the economic and political world from 1871 to 1914 was one of Manichean struggle: Countries attempted to establish spheres of influence behind high tariff barriers, and multiple power centers between which war was by no means impossible. As the mildly social democrat Nirvana of the 1990s recedes into history, it is becoming increasingly clear that weak U.S. leadership and poorly designed policies have led us back into a similarly unpleasant economic environment.

The great advantage of Pax Americana, as of Pax Britannica between 1815 and about 1870, was that a single hegemonic power was able to enforce trading rules and prevent a descent into economically damaging protectionism. In the early 19th century, once Britain's economic position had been righted by the Liverpool ministry from the excessive debts incurred in the Napoleonic wars, the move toward free trade was steady. The Corn Laws were reduced in 1828 and abolished in 1846, while further tariff reductions culminating in the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty of 1860 minimized British tariff barriers.

Most of those tariff reductions were unilateral, but the 1860 Treaty pushed France also in the direction of free trade. Meanwhile U.S. tariffs remained moderate until the Civil War, as the South had the ability to veto tariff increases by the protectionist North, with a final tariff reduction under the much maligned President James Buchanan in 1857 reducing U.S. tariff rates to an average 18%. Germany was divided between protectionist Prussia and the free trading Rhineland, while Austria-Hungary and Russia retained high tariffs both internal and external. Nevertheless, until the 1860s it appeared that the world was moving gradually towards free trade, as economists were already recommending.

After 1870 Britain was no longer economically hegemonic – partly because of the damage done to her economy by her unilateral tariff disarmament in 1846-1860 while other countries retained protection – and tariffs began to rise. The U.S. Lincoln administration raised tariffs twice, in 1861 and 1862 and further tariff increases were enacted regularly, culminating in the ultra-protectionist McKinley tariff of 1890, with a 50% average rate, enthusiastically supported by Andrew Carnegie seeking to protect his steel business from British and now German competition. Germany, united in 1871, increased its tariffs sharply in 1879. Thereafter it pursued a policy of protectionism, seeking to draw smaller countries into its sphere of influence, which was to continue through the Nazi economic order of the late 1930s. France also increased her tariffs after her defeat of 1871, passing a particularly protectionist tariff law in 1892.

Thus while 1870-1914 saw the apogee of free international finance, it saw marked backsliding in the area of free trade. By 1900, all the major powers except the luckless Britain were thoroughly protectionist and industries such as steel and automobiles grew up along nationalist lines. World War I intensified this trend, the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930 carried it to its absurd destructive extreme, and it was only after World War II, when a new hegemon emerged, that tariffs once more began to decline.

The rise of tariff protection after 1870 also changed the relations between states. Before 1870 small states, for example those of Western Germany, had been able to prosper by forming global trade relationships, perhaps with limited free trade areas between themselves such as the German Zollverein. After 1870 this was no longer possible. Germany and Italy were formed as economically and politically powerful states and smaller states such as those in the Balkans prospered only by attaching themselves to a major power. Outside Europe, the period after the 1870s was the apogee of Imperialism with countries in Africa and Asia that had remained independent in spite of their technological backwardness becoming increasingly dominated by one or more European powers or in some cases, such as China, the subject of diplomatic and occasionally military conflict between them. It was not an accident that Japan felt the necessity in 1868 of modernizing itself in order not to fall victim to one of the Europeans; no such modernization had appeared necessary in 1820.

Kaiser Wilhelm II, to his contemporaries a bogeyman, to modern eyes a figure of fun overshadowed by his dreadful successor, both epitomized the 1870-1914 period of protectionism and, together with his mentor Otto von Bismarck, was its most successful protagonist. He believed in a German sphere of influence including Austria, much of the Balkans, the crumbling Ottoman Empire and, he hoped, eventually the oil-rich Middle East, held together by the Imperial Berlin-Baghdad Railway project. Germany's tariffs sufficed to fund a gigantic army, social security provisions that were generous by the standards of the time, rapidly improving living conditions and, after 1900 an embryonic navy that was regarded as serious threat by British governments.

Kaiser Wilhelm II's worldview was to modern eyes thoroughly unpleasant – witness his speech to troops departing to fight the 1900 Boxer Rebellion "When you come upon the enemy, smite him. Pardon will not be given. Prisoners will not be taken. Whoever falls into your hands is forfeit. Once, a thousand years ago, the Huns under their King Attila made a name for themselves, one still potent in legend and tradition. May you in this way make the name German remembered in China for a thousand years so that no Chinaman will ever again dare to even squint at a German." It was a long way from the civilized waltzing of the 1815 Congress of Vienna, and protectionism and the lack of a hegemon had caused the change.

From the 1970s, it became obvious that the world was moving back to a system of free international finance, similar to that of 1870-1914, but its move to free trade resembled more the middle rather than the tail-end of the nineteenth century. After the fall of Communism in 1989-91 the U.S. became a truly unchallenged hegemon, far more powerful in relative terms than Britain in 1815-1870. International institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and even the United Nations spread a center-left, mildly statist big-government version of the U.S. worldview, the "Washington Consensus" among the nations of the new emerging markets. Small countries, in particular those emerging from Soviet domination, could hope to prosper on the basis of universal free trade, and the success of the east Asian tigers showed that small size was no barrier to economic success.

Beginning in 2000, and more particularly since the financial crash of 2008 and the Obama presidency, the world has changed again. The U.S. is no longer an unchallenged hegemon, far from it. After one barely successful war in Iraq and another in Afghanistan that seems increasingly likely to end in failure, the United States' ability to project power is greatly diminished, its moral authority even moreso. The Washington Consensus has broken down, being replaced on the left by a reversion to out-and-out statism, on the right by a fierce determination to reassert control over runaway government finances and rent-seeking banking systems.

Small countries are finding the world an increasingly unforgiving place. Of the former Russian satellites, Georgia was invaded by Russia without significant opposition from the U.S., Ukraine has reverted to Russian domination, Kazakhstan has reversed its previous tentative opening to the West and Kyrgyzstan appears to be descending into chaos. In the Middle East Iran is increasingly self-confident, Turkey has turned away from the West, the Iraqi democracy appears likely to be short-lived and Israel is increasingly beleaguered. In Latin America, increasing numbers of countries are falling prey to the followers of the sinister Hugo Chavez. Even in Asia, which had appeared capitalism's most shining monument, Thailand and Sri Lanka are no longer progressing smoothly to a future of democracy and ever-increasing prosperity, while Japan appears less and less an example to follow.

As for free trade, the Doha round of trade talks is dead and buried, and even bilateral agreements with the United States have no chance of being ratified by the current Congress. The economic downturn has produced numerous new trade barriers of one kind or another, even if full 1930s-style protectionism has so far been avoided. The financial services sector is wholly unreformed from its rent-seeking metastasis since the 1980s, and increasing numbers of governments are erecting barriers to its depredations in the form of capital controls of one sort or another.

The U.S. is unlikely ever to enjoy again its hegemony of 1990-2008. Its economy retains the flexibility that had made it so admired, but the burden of state spending has increased by over one-third since 2005 and taxation will inevitably rise in response. Most important, a decade and a half of ultra-low interest rates have de-capitalized the economy, not only leaving American savers without enough savings to finance their old age, but also leaving American business starved of capital for expansion, as ever-increasing percentages of the available finance pool head into the government deficit maw. Going forward, U.S. living standards will inevitably decline, while politically the likely result will be a retreat into isolationism

and a refusal to get involved in the intractable problems of the international order. Even if the United States attempts to project its power under some new president, it will find financial constraints prevent it from doing so.

The international order has thus returned to the Kaiser's world of multiple states, high tariff barriers and unfair trade competition. Small countries will have no alternative but to seek protection in the spheres of influence of their larger neighbors. Participants in the protectionist new world order will be a diminished United States, a sclerotic and inward-looking EU, projecting its power no further than the Balkans, one or possibly two left-leaning Latin American blocs led by Brazil and Venezuela (which may or may not combine), a resource-rich and oppressive bloc led by Russia, a highly unstable Middle East dominated by Turkey and Iran, and an impoverished and unstable south Asian bloc led by India. By far the most powerful and successful bloc will be led by China, which will include much of south-east Asia and large parts of Africa. There will remain a few substantial independent states: an isolationist Japan, an unstable Indonesia, perhaps a modestly prosperous Australia. However overall the world will geopolitically look like that of the aggressively competitive 1890s or, if we are unlucky, the haunted 1930s.

And ironically enough, the new Kaiser Wilhelm II will be Chinese.

Martin Hutchinson is the author of "Great Conservatives" (Academica Press, 2005) – details can be found on the Web site www.greatconservatives.com – and co-author with Professor Kevin Dowd of "Alchemists of Loss" (Wiley – 2010). Details forthcoming.

The Bear's Lair is a weekly column that is intended to appear each Monday, an appropriately gloomy day of the week. Its rationale is that the proportion of "sell" recommendations put out by Wall Street houses remains far below that of "buy" recommendations. Accordingly, investors have an excess of positive information and very little negative information. The column thus takes the ursine view of life and the market, in the hope that it may be usefully different from what investors see elsewhere.

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Systemic Crisis of the World Economy: Global Geopolitical Dislocation

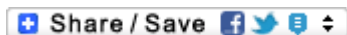
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Wednesday, June 23, 2010

Damon Vrabel: Fascism–American Style

Fascism–American Style

by Damon Vrabel [article link](#)

June 22nd, 2010 | Max Keiser

Since we're stuck in a monetary system that allows a tiny private sector clique to control everything (business, government, military, non-profits, schools, families, etc) by putting everyone else in debt, we've been living in financial dictatorship for a long time. It has been a soft PR dictatorship of Hickey-Freeman suits and Sax 5th Avenue ties, Harvard pedigrees and fratboy schmarm. But hard dictatorship has been coming out of hiding for several years, especially since 2001. Not only can the money powers steal trillions from the masses to hand over to themselves, but they can suck the military into conquering poor countries that aren't subject to their usury vortex system, build Homeland to spy on Americans, and have the CIA assassinate US citizens.

There is no question that full-blown fascism is planned for the supposed land of the free as they try to move us into the new global system. And all the Republicans blaming Obama for it, just like the Democrats who blamed Bush, need to stop being suckers and realize how the politicians are not in charge. The money powers knew 100 years ago they couldn't subject their wealth and power to the whims of mass political opinion...they learned well from the Teddy Roosevelt days. Ever since, they have built increasing control into the system.

Blame the politicians? Absolutely...each administration takes an incremental step for the money powers. But don't get suckered into believing a politician from your side of the aisle playing the same old game of flipping between left and right is going to change anything. We've been sold on parties just like we've been sold on Coke vs. Pepsi—they're the same.

Find leaders who know their neighbors, who understand the mechanics of a republic vs. empire, who understand the power of those who control all money in our system, rather than repeatedly voting for unhappy, addictive Harvard/Yale elitists who get a rush out of "system managing" the masses for the money powers. Any narcissist who thinks one dude in a distant white house can system manage 308,000,000 people should never come close to actually being in that white house. But that's who we've put in that house for the last several decades.

Luckily people are now breaking free of the PR programming. The choice isn't left vs. right. It is big vs. small, republic vs. empire.

Max Keiser [home page](#)



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Danny Schechter: Corporate Anarchy: Wall Street and BP Criminals At Large

Corporate Anarchy: Wall Street and BP Criminals At Large

By Danny Schechter [article link](#)

June 23, 2010 | AlterNet

It seems clear that BP can't seem to fix the catastrophic gusher the press calls a "leak," and that President Obama can't fix the economy because its problems are structural and won't respond to soaring rhetoric emanating from his bully pulpit.

Meanwhile, most of the world's people really don't get the fix we are all in. I take that back; the million Americans who have just lost their benefits probably do. The deficit hawks voted that down without doing anything about the growing deficit of jobs.

Forty-three members of the Congress and the Senate are tinkering with an increasingly diluted "financial reform bill." Lobbies like the powerful Business Roundtable have pushed the White House to weaken proposed curbs on executive compensation while former Fed head Tim Geithner is maneuvering behind the scenes to save dangerous derivative trading from too much regulation.

It is for this reason that financial writer Ilan Moscovitz worries about a coming financial meltdown, writing, "One of the biggest contentions remains what to do about the mind-boggling, vast, and opaque derivatives market owned by the nation's too-big-to-fail megabanks. The problem is getting worse. Notional amounts of derivatives held by federally insured banks have risen to more than \$200 trillion."

Hmm....

And on the corporate crime front, the FBI has busted no fewer than 1,000-plus mortgage fraudsters last week, but has yet to go after the firms that securitized these mortgages and pedaled them with inflated values, or then overleveraged their deals and insured themselves against expected defaults. Most of Wall Street's financial criminals are still at large.

Gonzalo Lira, writing from Chile, sees a link between BP's crime against the environment and Wall Street's crimes against investors, homeowners and workers:

The BP oil spill is part of the same problem as the financial crisis: The BP oil spill and the banking crisis are two examples of the era we are living in, the era of corporate anarchy. In a nutshell, in this era of corporate anarchy, corporations do not have to abide by any rules—none at all. Legal, moral, ethical, even financial rules are irrelevant. They have all been rescinded in the pursuit of profit—literally nothing else matters. As a result, corporations currently exist in a state of almost pure anarchy—but an anarchy directly related to their size: The larger the corporation, the greater its absolute freedom to do and act as it pleases.

In many ways, we have been here before in our one nation under the dollar sign. Economist Gary Gorton of Yale and the National Bureau of Economic Research explains the dark side of a capitalist system that has failed repeatedly:

Yes, we have been through this before, tragically many times. U.S. financial history is replete with banking crises and the predictable political responses. Most people are unaware of this history, which we are repeating....So, the panic in 2007 was not like the previous panics in American history (like the Panic of 1907 ... or that of 1837, 1857, 1873 and so on) in that it was not a mass run on banks by individual depositors, but instead was a run by firms and institutional investors on financial firms. The fact that the run was not observed by regulators, politicians, the media, or ordinary Americans has made the events particularly hard to understand. It has opened the door to spurious, superficial, and politically expedient "explanations" and demagoguery.

Today's well-endowed financial institutions use advertising, PR and media influence to downplay their own responsibility. They spin the news to tell us recovery is just around the corner. Former bank regulator Bill Black debunks this view in an interview with Yahoo's Finance program: "It's in the interest of the financial community to send this propaganda out," Black says. "It's remarkable not that they do it but that it still works."

In other words, this isn't the first time we've been told "the crisis is over" and that "banks are well capitalized" – and it probably won't be the last.

Black, the professor and former financial regulator, foresees another wave of foreclosures and future bank losses of more than \$2.5 trillion vs. the government's \$599 billion estimate.

Eric Von Berg, a California mortgage banker, worries that no new regulations are yet in place. Contrary to many media accounts, he challenges the idea that Wall Street is too complicated to be regulated:

Nuclear power is complicated – we regulate that. Why? Because it can blow up in OUR FACES! But finance is not that complicated. Ask a kindergartner: What is a loan? If you lend a classmate a dollar, you expect him to pay it back. What is loan underwriting? If that classmate is unlikely to pay it back, do not lend him the dollar. Explain a credit default swap to a kindergartner? You offer a quarter to the friend of the kid to whom you lent the dollar, if he guarantees his friend will pay you back. A derivatives market? You go to your fellow kindergartners and take bets on whether the borrower-classmate will or won't pay his debt. It is not that complicated. It should not be that hard to regulate.

The failure to regulate is not just a political failure; it's a sign of the unchecked power by an economic oligarchy that's bought up our Congress. They dominate the economy through a process called "financialization."

The president, who is clearly a corporate booster, and recipient of their largess, is now being spanked by major business media for daring to criticize BP. The usually constrained economist labels Obama "Vladimir" (after Putin, not Lenin) for attacking economic oligarchs even though BP's stock price went up after it agreed to set up a \$20 billion fund to compensate victims.

I have often felt alone in suggesting there is major criminality behind the financial crisis. Now, several academics like Brown University's Ross Levine seem to be toying with the idea. He writes, "The evidence indicates that regulatory agencies were aware of the growing fragility of the financial system due to their policies and yet chose not to modify those policies, suggesting that 'negligent homicide' contributed to the financial system's collapse." (Negligent homicide is a capital crime!)

He adds:

Thus, the evidence is inconsistent with testimonies before the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission by Robert Rubin (former Treasury secretary and former director of Citigroup), Charles O. Prince III (former CEO of Citigroup), and Alan Greenspan (former Chairman of the Fed), who claim that the crisis was an unprecedented and unpredictable accident. The crisis did not just happen. Policymakers and regulators, along with private sector co-conspirators, helped cause it. ...

The evidence indicates that financial sector policies during the period from 1996 through 2006 precipitated the crisis. Either by becoming willfully blind to excessive risk taking or by maintaining policies that encouraged destabilizing behaviors, policymakers and regulatory agencies contributed to the financial system's collapse. As noted by Senator Carl Levin, "The recent financial crisis was not a natural disaster; it was a manmade economic assault. It will happen again unless we change the rules."

To their frequent full-page ads, BP has now added a vague phrase of contrition: "We may not always be perfect, but we will make this right."

Really?

And who will make our economy right?

Danny Schechter writes the News Dissector blog for MediaChannel.org. His latest book is PLUNDER: Investigating Our Economic Calamity (Cosimo Books).

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Tuesday, June 22, 2010

[Jim Hightower: Real Populism](#)

Time to Take on Sarah Palin, the Tea Party Screamers, and Their Corporate Masters With Real Populism

By Jim Hightower [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 21, 2010 | Hightower Lowdown | AlterNet

If a political pollster came to my door and asked whether I consider myself a conservative or a liberal, I'd answer, "No."

Not to be cute -- I have a bit of both in me -- but because, like most Americans, my beliefs can't be squeezed into either of the tidy little boxes that the establishment provides.

Also, most of the big issues that our country faces defy right-left categorization. Take conservatism. It's a doctrine that classically embodies caution and... well, conservation. Yet the gushing and spreading Gulf Coast oil disaster was caused by people who proudly identify themselves as conservatives -- including top executives of BP, Halliburton, and Transocean, as well as the top regulatory officials involved. However, they're not conservatives, they're anything-goes corporatists. Likewise, the five Supreme Court justices who recently enthroned corporate money over democracy ([Lowdown, March 2010](#)) are routinely labeled by the media as "conservative" -- but their reckless rulings destroy our democratic values, rather than conserve them. Again, corporatists all.

As I've rambled through life, I've observed that the true political spectrum in our society does not range from right to left, but from top to bottom. This is how America's economic and political systems really shake out, with each of us located somewhere up or down that spectrum, mostly down. Right to left is political theory; top to bottom is the reality we actually experience in our lives every day--and the vast majority of Americans know that they're not even within shouting distance of the moneyed powers that rule from the top of both systems, whether those elites call themselves conservatives or liberals.

For me, the "ism" that best encompasses and addresses this reality is populism. What is it? Essentially, it's the continuation of America's democratic revolution. It encompasses and extends the creation of a government that is us. Instead of a "trickle down" approach to public policy, populism is solidly grounded in a "percolate up" philosophy that springs directly from America's founding principle of the Common Good.

Few people today call themselves populists, but I think most are. I'm not talking about the recent political outbursts by confused, used, and abused teabag ranters who've been organized by corporate front groups to spread a hatred of government. Rather, I mean the millions of ordinary Americans in every state who're battling the real power that's running roughshod over us: out-of-control corporations. With their oceans of money and their hired armies of lobbyists, lawyers, economists, consultants, and PR agents, these self-serving, autocratic entities operate from faraway executive suites and Washington backrooms to rig the economic and governmental rules so that they capture more and more of America's money and power.

The superwealthy speculators and executives who own and run these far-flung, private empires don't live in our zip codes, but their power reaches into all of our lives. During the past 30 years or so, they have quietly succeeded in untethering their ilk from our country's quaint notion that we're all in this together. They've elevated their private interests above the public interest and entrenched themselves as the preeminent decision makers over our economy, environment, and media -- and our government. They pull the strings.

You can shout yourself red-faced at Congress critters you don't like and demand a government so small it'd fit in the back room of Billy Bob's Bait Shop & Sushi Stand -- but you won't be touching the corporate and financial powers behind the throne. In fact, weak government is the political wet dream of corporate chieftains, which is why they're so ecstatic to have the Tea Party out front for them. But the real issue isn't small government; it's good government. (Can I get an amen from Gulf Coast fishing families on that!?)

This is where populists come in. You wouldn't know it from the corporate media, but in just about every town or city in our land you can find some groups or coalitions that, instead of merely shouting at politicians, have come together to find their way around, over, or through the blockage that big money has put in the way of their democratic aspirations. Also, in the process of organizing, strategizing, and mobilizing, these groups are building relationships and community, creating something positive from a negative.

This is the historic, truly democratic, grassroots populism of workaday folks who strive (and, more often than not, succeed) to empower themselves to take charge economically as well as politically.

With the rebellious spirit and sense of hope that have defined America from the start, these populists are directly challenging the plutocratic order that reigns over us. This populism is unabashedly a class movement -- one that seeks not merely to break the iron grip that centralized corporate power has on our country, but also to build cooperative democratic structures so that ordinary people -- not moneyed interests -- define and control our country's economic and political possibilities.

Reclaim Populism

It's necessary to restate the solid principles of populism and reassert its true spirit because both are now being subverted and severely perverted by corporate manipulators and a careless media establishment. To these debasers of the language, any politicians or pundits who tap into any level of popular anger (toward Obama, liberals, the IRS, poor people, unions, gays, immigrants, Hollywood, community organizers, environmentalists, et al.) get a peel-off "populist" label slapped onto their lapels -- even when their populist pose is funded by and operates as a front for one or another corporate interest. That's not populism; it's rank hucksterism, disguising plutocrats as champions of the people.

Witness Sarah Palin, whose political flowering was induced by the rich stimulant of corporate money and who has now been turned into an overnight multimillionaire by agreeing to serve as the political face and voice for such corporate barons as Rupert Murdoch. Palin's chief function is to rally the teabag faithful (who are less than 20% of the public) into a cacophonous, furious, and ludicrous defense of the domineering power of -- guess who? -- corporate barons.

Yet, few in the media peek behind her facade. After hearing Palin loyally denounce the unmitigated evil of government at a recent Tea Party convention, for example, Washington Post columnist David Broder, the eminent establishmentarian, gushed about her "pitch-perfect populism."

Even worse than the media's misapplication of the label is its desperate determination to marginalize what is actually a venerable and historic movement as nothing more than assorted gaggles of grumps and quacks. George Will, the effete conservative commentator, sniffed in a February column that populism is "a celebration of intellectual ordinariness." Then he dismissed its political importance with a sweeping declaration that populism "always wanes because it never seems serious as a solution."

Perhaps George had his signature bowtie too tightly tied that day, cutting off the flow of blood to his memory cells. Otherwise, someone of his intellectual extraordinariness would have recalled that the populists of the 1880s were the ones who formed the first U.S. political party to propose and push such serious solutions as women's suffrage; wage protections and an eight-hour day for labor; direct election of U.S. senators by the people; elimination of poll taxes and literacy tests for voting; corralling the power of lobbyists; civil-service laws; pensions for veterans; a graduated income tax; elimination of all subsidies to private corporations; outlawing the Pinkerton system of corporate mercenaries to bust unions; and preserving America's natural resources from being monopolized for speculative purposes.

It's important to reclaim populism from dissemblers and hijackers because populism is a legitimate, positive, uniting political expression with a rich history (though largely untaught), a genuine appeal to today's disaffected majority, and a huge potential for making real democratic progress against corporate rule. There is serious power in the concept, which is precisely why corporatists are out to hide its long and proud history and to squeeze its meaning down to something as vacuous as "popular," allowing them to capture it for their own use.

Now is the time for progressives to reassert their populist beliefs and bona fides, for we're living in a teachable moment in which it's possible to reach most Americans with an aggressive and positive approach to achieving a higher level of economic and political democracy. There is a spreading and deepening recognition within today's broad middle class that they've been abandoned to a plutocracy that feels free to knock them down and leave them there. The disdain that the power elites have for the rest of us is glaringly and gallingly apparent:

* **Wall Street billionaires crash our economy** but are bailed out at our expense to continue their banksterism against us.

* **We're told to accept a "jobless recovery"** and to sit still for a "new normal" of perpetually low wages, continuing losses of American jobs, and steady erosion of union and consumer power.

* **We're presented with two flagrant examples of murderous corporate greed** -- first at Massey Energy's deadly coal mine, then at BP's deadly offshore oil well -- yet no corporate executive has even been arrested.

Do the Powers That Be (whether liberal or conservative) really imagine that the great majority of Americans don't see or don't care about this rank classism, this in-your-face stiffing of the middle class? Not only do regular folks see and care, but there has been a corresponding rise in populist attitudes and activism each time the government shows itself to be in cahoots with the stiffers. Following Bush, Obama brought "the audacity of hope" to Washington, and most of us cheered. But people have since seen too many times when he and other top Democrats posed as reformers, only to back off when push came to shove, ending up coddling the corporate plutocracy.

Take that January Supreme Court ruling that literally allows corporations to buy our elections. Arcane issues of campaign financing don't usually move the bubble in opinion polls, but the Great Unwashed instantly grasped that this was raw corporate usurpation of the people's democratic authority, and they howled. With polls showing that 83% of Americans (including 73% of Republicans) are demanding immediate action to overturn this outrage, Obama himself pledged to jump right on it.

Months passed. No action. Finally, Democrats introduced what they called "a sweeping reform." Big Whoopie. Rather than boldly leading the charge for a constitutional amendment to reverse this corporate coup, the bill caves in to the Court's disastrous ruling, meekly proposing nothing more than some new campaign-finance disclosure rules. It actually gives legal cover for Exxon Mobil, Goldman Sachs, Walmart, and the rest to steal our government -- they just have to wear name tags while doing it. Harsh, huh?

This kind of stuff is why there's a yearning for-as we say in Texas -- politics with hair on it. On April 30, [I was interviewed by Bill Moyers](#) for a special edition of his PBS television show. It was the final broadcast of his long-running, excellent, and important "Journal," and he chose to close with his own testament to what he sees as the promising rise of modern-day populism:

"Plutocracy and democracy don't mix... The fate and character of our country are up for grabs. So along with Jim Hightower and many of you, I am biased: democracy only works when we claim it as our own."

Following the broadcast, hundreds of emails and letters poured into my office, with many more going to Bill -- practically all of them positive. Populism clearly struck a chord with folks, and I was encouraged by the many who accepted our interview as a call to action. Here's a sampling from around the country:

Plattsburgh, NY: "A couple of my friends and I are most inspired by the Populist message and would like to meet other like-minded people. You speak my language and have inspired me to get more involved."

North Carolina: "Always thought I was a frustrated southern Democrat, but I'm thinking I may be a populist now. I would love to find out where I can get involved here in North Carolina."

Western Massachusetts: "I was very cynical about grassroots movements, especially the Tea Party. Your remarks were clarifying. Any advice on how I can help?"

Hillsboro, OR: "I have the energy to help drive these changes but am unsure as to how I can most effectively help. I know just being involved is a huge step, and so I want to get involved."

Nebraska: "I would just like to get a dialogue going [and] to make my website one that would be useful in getting people aware and aroused to put the government back to work for the people, not just the rich folks."

Wisconsin: "To know that there are people that are not just laying down to be trampled on and stepped over, brings me some comfort."

Washington State: "I just watched Moyers' show and found out I'm a populist; where do I sign up?"

A Movement

We have a populist majority in America right now. Look at nearly any poll or talk with people at the local Chat & Chew Cafe, and you'll find -- contrary to teabag hype, the contrived "wisdom" of major media outlets, and the political weeniness of too many Democratic "leaders" -- that most folks are already with us on practically all of the big issues related to the corporatization of America (jobs, Wall Street, pollution, money in politics, a green economy, health care, media, unions, affordable housing, pensions, K-Street lobbyists, local businesses, infrastructure investment, progressive taxation, you name it).

Moreover, there is huge support for our fundamental populist values (economic fairness, social justice, and equal opportunity for ALL) and for our guiding principle of the Common Good. People believe in these ideals and hold them deep in their hearts, even though our corporate rulers don't want them discussed, much less implemented.

From coast to coast, in nearly every community, you'll find people who are implementing these principles in their work, businesses, schools, families, organizations, religions, neighborhoods, and every other area of their lives. Millions of Americans are deliberately defying the corporate order to create new structures, groups, systems, and relationships based on richer values than the stilted corporate ethic.

Cooperatives, for example, are one bright populist path to structural economic change. You can join with others in your community to own, control, manage, profit from, and enjoy the places where you work, live, produce, play, buy, eat, bank, get health care, etcetera. These are democratic entities in which decisions are not handed down from the top, but made by the members. As opposed to aloof, absentee, autocratic corporate owners who extract wealth from communities, co-ops are of, by, and for the community, creating good jobs and distributing both wealth and power locally.

The cooperative idea is big and growing rapidly in every state. About 72,000 are up and running, involving 120 million members. It's a valid, large-scale alternative for building democratic values directly into America's economic structure, so turn your imagination loose. For instance, here in my town of Austin, a bunch of enterprising folks have launched Black Star, America's first cooperatively owned and run microbrewery and pub! Needless to say, I'm in.

Big changes require big ideas rooted in big ideals -- combined with strategic thinking, lots of grunt-level organizing, a broad willingness to cooperate, and the tenacity to stick with it. In other words, a movement. It's not something that can be created by one presidential campaign, and it has to be more than an uncoordinated collection of issue groups.

The populist movement of the late nineteenth century, for example, was not a helter-skelter organization thrown together on the whim of some angry, inept know-nothings. It was built by smart, knowledgeable big thinkers, strategists, and organizers.

They created a nationwide network of cooperative enterprises to provide capital, supplies, and marketing mechanisms for movement members. They formed their own integrated media network of newspapers, magazines, books, and speakers, allowing the movement to communicate and educate constantly. They trained thousands to be leaders. They ran their own members for public office, electing hundreds all across the country. They taught literacy classes, put on cultural events,

provided lecturers, formed bands and singing groups, held festivals, and otherwise linked members into fun, self-improvement, and a shared social experience.

That's what a movement looks like.

Let's Get Moving

Progressive forces today already have nearly all of the components of an effective movement at work around the country, but there's little connection among the components, no uniting theme to our many issues, no longterm focus, and no common strategy. Because of this, we're not actually a movement -- and we're not really moving much.

To make the whole of our efforts greater than the sum of our diverse, dispersed parts, we urgently need to be more unified. I don't mean anything grandiose like one big happy organization, but modest steps forward. It could begin simply by having some serious conversations among our groups, media sources, organizers, funders, and other resources about how we can produce a bit more cooperation and slightly more coordination.

It seems to me that the rallying point is a focus on the populist possibilities presented by the corporate arrogance and avarice that is crushing our country's potential. With that, we might actually become a movement that moves.

[Jim Hightower](#) is a national radio commentator, writer, public speaker, and author of the new book, "[Swim Against the Current: Even a Dead Fish Can Go With the Flow](#)." (Wiley, March 2008) He publishes the monthly "[Hightower Lowdown](#)," co-edited by Phillip Frazer.

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[Shamus Cooke: The Gulf Oil Disaster Will Not Change U.S. Energy Policy](#)

The Gulf Oil Disaster Will Not Change U.S. Energy Policy

by Shamus Cooke [article link](#)

June 22, 2010 | Global Research

As is typical with U.S. politicians and media, an extremely serious topic has nearly been reduced to absurdity. Once the urgency of the Gulf oil eruption has been fully sterilized, the stage will be set for business as usual politics — with the corporations comfortably in the driver seat.

But the corporate establishment cannot act too quickly in its fervor to drop the topic.

The environmental destruction brought on by corporate greed has opened the eyes of millions in the U.S. — eyes that are struggling to stay open as they now face the enormous sleep-producing machine of the mainstream media.

One way the media and politicians hypnotize the masses is by spreading the blame, and there are countless ways to do this.

The right-wing media is taking a risky propaganda move by blaming Obama's "big government" actions against BP, which is painted as the hapless victim of Obama's "socialism."

Contrary to the media's reporting, Obama did not "make" BP set up a \$20 billion dollar account to pay for damages; this amount was agreed on behind closed doors for the purposes of calming public anger. BP had to "agree" to the "deal"; and

as the Huffington Post reports, "... [Obama] administration officials also acknowledge a negotiation is at play here, and key issues remain unsolved." (June 16, 2010).

In making its "big government" accusations, the right wing vastly underestimates working peoples' hatred for giant corporations. As opposed to wishing that the government should take it easier on corporations, workers would like a much tougher response, for once.

How happy would millions of people be if BP's assets — including those of the top shareholders and executives — were seized to clean up the oil spill and pay workers for their loss of livelihood? This cost will be at least a hundred times what BP "agreed" to pay. How many millions of people living in the U.S. angrily disagreed with Obama when he said: "BP is a strong and viable company and it is in all of our interests that it remain so."

The media slant of the right wing is not entirely irrational, since it stems from a very real emotion: the fear that working people will demand that corporations be controlled democratically for the purpose of social need, not shareholders' profit. It is this phobia that will continue to guide the right-wing's media perspective as the recession grinds on, creating an increased anti-corporate mentality.

And while the right wing poisons the truth about the oil spill by blaming Obama's "big government," Obama seeks to minimize BP's role — and his own — by repeatedly blaming "America's addiction to oil." Although it's true that the U.S. economy is oil dependent, Obama's ulterior motive here is to disperse blame to everybody in the country, since most people drive cars or use oil-driven transportation. If we are all equally at fault, then nobody is to blame. The current crisis is thus pushed aside, so that "long term solutions" may be discussed instead.

And while long-term energy solutions are desperately needed, they will not come from the U.S. two-party system. Obama's oval office speech made this clear enough: in response to the largest environmental disaster in the recorded history, one of two "solutions" mentioned by Obama was "higher energy efficiency standards for buildings." Obama's cuddling of BP results in part from another kind of investment of this mega-corporation: "The largest beneficiary of campaign donations from BP in the 2008 election cycle, for instance, was President Obama, who took in \$77,000 from company executives and its political action committee." (The New York Times, June 19, 2010).

Obama's oval office speech did not even mention the Democrat's stalled energy bill, which includes the highly touted but Wall Street inspired Cap and Trade scheme. Even if the hugely insufficient energy bill did pass, it allots a measly \$4 billion in research and development for alternative energy, an amount that will ensure that little progress is made.

An ex-advisor to Bill Clinton, Bill Galston, correctly concluded: "... [Obama's oval office] speech tacitly sounded the death-knell for the inclusion of serious climate change provisions in any energy bill that Congress might enact this year."

In fact, a real solution to the U.S. energy crisis was hinted at during Obama's oval office speech, when he made reference to the U.S. economy's immense transformation during World War II. His point was that the U.S. economy can change direction drastically to produce certain outcomes, and he's right. War is definitely a challenge that the corporate establishment is willing to spend massive resources on. During World War II, the entire U.S. economy was directed towards this aim, with factories re-opening to massively produce tanks and bombs.

A similar effort will not be made towards alternative forms of energy. Millions of jobs could easily be created if closed auto plants and other factories were retooled to massively produce solar panels, windmills, energy-efficient windows, high-speed trains, busses, etc.

The Gulf oil catastrophe has not proven to be a large enough disaster to provoke change, proving that nothing will as long as the Democrats and the Republicans are in charge. The U.S. oil and coal addictions will continue to produce masses of pollution and environmental destruction, the likes of which are beginning to challenge the future of humanity.

Since giant corporations constitute an enormous barrier to social progress, it will take the majority of working people to concentrate their energy on removing these obstacles. The first step will be to end all support for the corporate-controlled Democrats and Republicans and work towards creating a political party that is democratically controlled by working people.

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Shamus Cooke is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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Monday, June 21, 2010

Jonathon Schooner: The Federal Reserve is Evil

The Federal Reserve is Evil

by Jonathon Schooner [article link](#)

06.18.10 | Silver Bear Cafe

The first misconception that most people have is that the Federal Reserve Bank is a branch of the US government. IT IS NOT. THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK IS A PRIVATE COMPANY. Most people believe it is as American as the Constitution. THE FACT IS THE CONSTITUTION FORBIDS IT'S EXISTENCE. Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution states that Congress shall have the power to create money and regulate the value thereof, NOT A BUNCH OF INTERNATIONAL BANKERS! Today the FED controls and profits by printing WORTHLESS PAPER, called money, through the Treasury, regulating its value, AND THE BIGGEST OUTRAGE OF ALL, COLLECTING INTEREST ON IT! (THE SO-CALLED NATIONAL DEBT). The FED began with approximately 300 people or banks that became owners, stockholders purchasing stock at \$100 per share - the stock is not publicly traded) in the Federal Reserve Banking System. They make up an international banking cartel of wealth beyond comparison. The FED banking system collects billions of dollars in interest annually and distributes the profits to its shareholders. The Congress illegally gave the FED the right to print money through the Treasury at no interest to the FED.

The FED creates money from nothing, and loans it back to us through banks, and charges interest on our currency. The FED also buys Government debt with money printed on a printing press and charges U.S. taxpayers interest. Many Congressmen and Presidents say this is fraud. Who actually owns the Federal Reserve Central Banks? The ownership of the 12 Central banks, a very well kept secret, has been revealed: 1. Rothschild Bank of London 2. Warburg Bank of Hamburg 3. Rothschild Bank of Berlin 4. Lehman Brothers of New York 5. Lazard Brothers of Paris 6. Kuhn Loeb Bank of New York 7. Israel Moses Seif Banks of Italy 8. Goldman, Sachs of New York 9. Warburg Bank of Amsterdam 10. Chase Manhattan Bank of New York.

These bankers are connected to London Banking Houses which ultimately control the FED. When England lost the Revolutionary War with America where our forefathers were fighting their own government, they planned to control us by controlling our banking system, the printing of our money, and our debt. The individuals listed below owned banks which in turn owned shares in the FED. The banks listed below have significant control over the New York FED District, which controls the other 11 FED Districts. These banks also are partly foreign owned and control the New York FED District Bank: First National Bank of New York, James Stillman National City Bank, New York, Mary W. Harnman, National Bank of Commerce, New York, A.D. Juillard Hanover, National Bank, New York, Jacob Schiff, Chase National Bank, New York, Thomas F. Ryan, Paul Warburg, William Rockefeller, Levi P. Morton, M.T. Pyne, George F. Baker, Percy Pyne, Mrs. G.F.

St. George, J.W. Sterling, Katherine St. George, H.P. Davidson, J.P. Morgan (Equitable Life/Mutual Life), Edith Brevour, T. Baker.

How did it happen? After previous attempts to push the Federal Reserve Act through Congress, a group of bankers funded and staffed Woodrow Wilson's campaign for President. He had committed to sign this act. In 1913, a Senator, Nelson Aldrich, maternal grandfather to the Rockefellers, pushed the Federal Reserve Act through Congress just before Christmas when much of Congress was on vacation. When elected, Wilson passed the FED. Later, Wilson remorsefully replied, referring to the FED, "I have unwittingly ruined my country". Now the banks financially back sympathetic candidates. Not surprisingly, most of these candidates are elected.

The bankers employ members of the Congress on weekends (nickname T&T club -out Thursday...in Tuesday with lucrative salaries. Additionally, the FED started buying up the media in the 1930's and now owns or significantly influences most of it. Presidents Lincoln, Jackson, and Kennedy tried to stop this family of bankers by printing U.S. dollars without charging the taxpayers interest. Today, if the government runs a deficit, the FED prints dollars through the U.S. Treasury, buys the debt, and the dollars are circulated into the economy. In 1992, taxpayers paid the FED banking system \$286 billion in interest on debt the FED purchased by printing money virtually cost free. Forty percent of our personal federal income taxes goes to pay this interest. The FED's books are not open to the public. Congress has yet to audit it. Congressman Wright Patman was Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Banking and Currency for 40 years. For 20 of those years, he introduced legislation to repeal the Federal Reserve Banking Act of 1913. Congressman Henry Gonzales, Chairman of a banking committee, introduced legislation to repeal the Federal Reserve Banking Act of 1913 almost every year. It's always defeated, the media remains silent, and the public never learns the truth. The same bankers who own the FED control the media and give huge political contributions to sympathetic members of Congress.

THE FED FEARS THE POPULATION WILL BECOME AWARE OF THIS FRAUD AND DEMAND CHANGE. We, the People, are at fault for being passive and allowing this to continue. THE FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD, A GOVERNMENT BOARD, HAS CHEATED THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OUT OF ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY THE NATIONAL DEBT SEVERAL TIMES OVER. The depredations and the iniquities of the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Reserve banks acting together have cost this country dearly.

They are private credit monopolies which prey upon the people of the United States for the benefit of themselves and their foreign customers; foreign and domestic speculators and swindlers; the rich and predatory money lenders. This is an era of economic misery and for the reasons that caused that misery, the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Reserve banks are fully liable. Half a million dollars was spent on one part of propaganda organized by those same European bankers for the purpose of misleading public opinion in regard to the Federal Reserve Bank.

Every effort has been made by the Federal Reserve Board to conceal its power but the truth is the Federal Reserve Board has USURPED THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES. IT CONTROLS EVERYTHING HERE AND IT CONTROLS ALL OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS. IT MAKES AND BREAKS GOVERNMENTS AT WILL. No man and no body of men is more entrenched in power than the arrogant credit monopoly which operates the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Reserve banks. These evil-doers have robbed this country. What the Government has permitted the Federal Reserve Board to steal from the people should now be restored to the people.

Our people's money to the extent of \$1,200,000,000 has within the last few months been shipped abroad to redeem Federal Reserve Notes and to pay other gambling debts of the traitorous Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Reserve banks. The greater part of our monetary stock has been shipped to foreigners. Why should we promise to pay the debts of foreigners to foreigners? Why should American Farmers and wage earners add millions of foreigners to the number of their dependents? Why should the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Reserve banks be permitted to finance our competitors in all parts of the world? The Federal Reserve Act should be repealed and the Federal Reserve banks, having violated their charters, should be liquidated immediately. FAITHLESS GOVERNMENT OFFICERS WHO HAVE VIOLATED THEIR OATHS SHOULD BE IMPEACHED AND BROUGHT TO TRIAL.

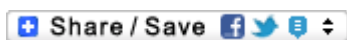
If the media is unbiased, independent and completely thorough, why haven't they discussed the FED? Currently, half the states have at least a grass roots movement in action to abolish the FED, but there's no press coverage. In July, 1968, the House Banking Subcommittee reported that Rockefeller, through Chase Manhattan Bank, controlled 5.9% of the stock in CBS. Furthermore, the bank had gained interlocking directorates with ABC.

In 1974, Congress issued a report stating that the Chase Manhattan Bank's stake in CBS rose to 14.1% and NBC to 4.5%. The same report said that the Chase Manhattan Bank held stock in 28 broadcasting firms. After this report, the Chase Manhattan Bank obtained 6.7% of ABC, and today the percentage is most likely much greater. It only requires 5% ownership to significantly influence the media. This is only one of 300 wealthy shareholders of the FED. It is believed other FED owners have similar holdings in the media. To control the media, FED bankers call in their loans if the media disagrees with them.

Rockefeller also controls the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the sole purpose of which is to aid in stimulating greater interest in foreign affairs and a one world government. Nearly every major newscaster belongs to the Council on Foreign Relations. The Council on Foreign Relations controls many major newspapers and magazines. Additionally, major corporations owned by FED shareholders are the source of huge advertising revenues which surely would influence the media.

Every day I hear people complaining about what they don't like about our government and media, but not one of them are willing to put forth an effort to try and change it, especially when it comes to their personal lives. We are as much a slave on a personal level, as our government is to the international bankers. We keep right on using the tool they put out here to control us, credit cards, and we are imprisoned by it. We are no longer willing to save up to buy something, we have to have it right now, so the Government has made it easy to have what you want without the having to save for it, (CREDIT). Don't you think it funny that in a land with so much wealth, only 2 PERCENT of the people own their homes? (CREDIT). Do you know 60 PERCENT of Americans have at least 3 Credit cards used to it's maximum? (CREDIT). Do you know that only 1 PERCENT of the people have their car paid for? (CREDIT). To be free, you must throw away your credit cards, and NEVER buy anything that you cannot afford at the moment of purchase. We will never be a free people until we rid ourselves of the burden placed here to control us, and when we stop renting from the powers, the power will cease to exist.

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James Petras: Twenty-Two Reasons Why American Working People Hate the State

Twenty-Two Reasons Why American Working People Hate the State

by James Petras [article link](#)

June 18, 2010 | Global Research

Introduction

Why does the rightwing attack on “Big Government” increasingly resonate with working people?

Liberals claim wage and salaried workers are acting against their “self-interest”, citing government welfare programs like social security and unemployment payments. Progressives argue that workers hostile to the state are ‘racists’, “fundamentalists” and/or irrational, blinded by misplaced fears of threats to individual freedoms.

I will argue there are many sound, rational, material reasons for working people to be in revolt against the state.

Twenty-Two Reasons Why Working People Hate the State

- 1.) Most wage and salaried workers pay disproportionately higher taxes than the corporate rich and therefore, millions of Americans work in the “underground economy” to make ends meet; thus subjecting themselves to arrest, and prosecution by the state for trying to make a living by avoiding onerous taxes.
- 2.) The state provides generous multi-year tax exemptions for corporations thus raising the tax rate for wage and salaried workers or eliminating vital services. The state’s inequitable tax revenue policies provoke resentment,.
- 3.) High taxes combined with fewer and more expensive public services, include growing costs of public higher education and higher health charges, feed popular antagonism and frustration that they and their children are being denied opportunities to get ahead and stay healthy.
- 4.) Many working people resent the fact that their tax money is being spent by the state on endless distant wars and to finance bailouts of Wall Street instead of investing it in reindustrializing America to create well paying jobs or to aid unemployed or underemployed workers unable to meet mortgage payments and facing eviction or homelessness. Most workers reject the inequitable budget expenditures that privilege the rich and deny the working people.
- 5.) Working people are appalled by the states hypocrisy and double standards in prosecuting “welfare cheats” for taking hundreds but overlooking corporate and banking swindlers, and Pentagon military cost overruns of hundreds of billions. Few working people believe there is equality before the law, implicitly rejecting its claims of legitimacy.
- 6.) Many working class families resent the fact that the state recruits their sons and daughters for wars, leading to death and crippling injuries instead of public service jobs, while the children of the rich and affluent pursue civilian careers.
- 7.) The state subsidizes and upgrades public infrastructure – roads, parks and utilities in upper end neighborhoods while ignoring the demands for improvements of low income communities. Moreover the state locates contaminants – incinerators, high polluting industries etc. – in close proximity to workers housing and schools.
- 8.) The state holds the minimum wage below increases in the cost of living but encourages and promotes excess profits.
- 9.) Law enforcement is strict in high end neighborhoods and lax in low income communities resulting in higher rates of homicides and robberies.
- 10.) State imposes constraints on labor organizations struggling to secure wages and benefits and ignores corporate intimidation and arbitrary firings of workers. The state encourages corporate mergers and acquisitions leading to monopolies but discourages collective action from below.
- 11.) State economic institutions recruit policymakers from banks and financial houses who make decisions favoring their former employers, while wage and salaried workers are excluded and have no representation in economic policy positions.
- 12.) The state increasingly infringes on individual freedoms of social activists via the Patriot Act, arbitrary arrests, and grants impunity to police violence and punishes whistle blowers, rejecting citizen reviews with punitive powers.
- 13.) The state is highly responsive to and increases funding for the military-industrial complex, the relocation of MNC overseas and the high income Israel lobby while cutting funding for public investment in productive activity, applied technology and high tech job training for US workers and salaried employees and their children.
- 14.) State policies have increased inequalities between the top 10% and the bottom 50% for decades, turning the US into the industrial country with the greatest inequalities.

- 15.) State policies have led to declining living standards as wage and salary earners work longer hours with less job security, for a greater number of years before receiving pensions and social security and under greater environmental hazards.
- 16.) Elected state officials break most campaign promises to working people while fulfilling promises for the upper class/corporate banking elite.
- 17.) State officials pay greater attention and are more responsive to a few big financial contributors than to millions of voters.
- 18.) State officials are more responsive to payoffs from corporate lobbies protecting corporate profits than to the health, educational and income needs of the electorate.
- 19.) State-corporate links lead to deregulation, which results in contamination of the environment leading to the bankruptcy of small businesses and loss of many jobs, as well as the loss of recreational areas, spoiling rest and recreation for working people.
- 20.) The state increases the retirement age rather than increase the social security payments by the rich, with the result that workers in unhealthy work environments will enjoy fewer years of retirement in good health.
- 21.) The state judicial system is more likely to render favorable decisions to wealthy plaintiffs with high paid, politically connected lawyers against workers defended by inexperienced public defenders.
- 22.) State tax collectors are more likely to pursue wage and salary tax payers than upper class corporate executives employing accountants with expert knowledge in tax loopholes and tax free shelters.

Conclusion

The state in its multiple activities, whether in law enforcement, military recruitment, tax and expenditure policies, environmental, pension and retirement legislation and administration, systematically favors the upper class and corporate elite against wage, salaried and small business people.

The state is permissive with the rich and repressive of the working and salaried employees, defending the privileges of the corporations and the impunity of the police state while infringing on the individual freedoms of the working people.

State policies increasingly extract more from the workers in terms of tax revenues and provide less in social payments, while lessening tax payments from Wall Street and inflating state transfers.

Popular perceptions of a hostile and exploitative state correspond to their everyday practical experiences; their anti-state behavior is selective and rational; most wage and salaried workers support social security and unemployment benefits and oppose higher taxes because they know or intuit that they are unfair.

Liberal academics and experts who claim workers are “irrational” are themselves practitioners of highly selective criticisms – pointing to (shrinking) state social benefits while ignoring the unjust, inequitable tax system and the biased behavior of the judicial, law enforcement, legislative and regulatory system.

State personnel, policy makers and enforcement officials are attentive to and responsive and deferential to the rich and hostile and indifferent or arrogant toward workers.

In summary the real issue is not that people are anti-state, but that the state is anti the majority of the people. In the face of the economic crises and prolonged imperial wars, the state becomes more brazenly aggressive in slashing living standards in order to channel record levels of public funds toward Wall Street speculators and the military industrial complex.

While liberal-progressives' remain embedded in 'neo-keynsian' statist ideology, outmoded in the face of a state thoroughly embedded in corporate networks, the New Right's "anti-statist" rhetoric resonates with the feelings, experiences and reasoning of important sectors of wage and salaried workers and small businesspeople.

The attempt by liberals and progressives to discredit this popular revolt against the state, by pointing to the corporate financing and rightwing manipulation behind the anti-statist movement is doomed to failure, because it fails to deal with the profound injustices experienced by working people today in their daily dealings with a state, largely administered by liberal corporate-militarists. The absence of an anti-statist left has opened the door for the rise of a mass based 'New Right'.

A 'new left' will emerge from civil society when it recognizes the pernicious exploitative role of the state, and is capable of dealing with the powerful ties between liberalism-militarism-corporate "welfarism". The revival and expansion of the debilitated public welfare programs for working people can only take place by dismantling the current state apparatus, and that depends on a complete break with both corporate parties and an agenda that 'revolutionizes' the way in which politics works in America.

James Petras is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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It's the New Deal! For Banks!

By David Glenn Cox [article link](#)
June 21, 2010 | OpEdNews
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America Speaks Back: Derailing the Drive to Cut Social Security and Medicare

by: Dean Baker [article link](#)
21 June 2010 | t r u t h o u t | Op-Ed
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Gonzalo Lira: What do BP and the Banks Have In Common?

What do BP and the Banks Have In Common? The Era of Corporate Anarchy

by Gonzalo Lira [article link](#)
June 19, 2010 | Global Research

On the occasion of the BP oil spill disaster, President Obama's delivered an Oval Office speech last night—a masterpiece of milquetoast faux-outrage. The speech was all about "clean energy" and "ending our dependence on fossil fuels". Faced with the BP oil spill—likely the most severe environmental disaster ever—this was President Obama's response: Polite outrage, and vague plans to "get tough", "set aside just compensation" and "do something".

President Obama missed what the BP oil spill disaster is really about. Though unquestionably an environmental disaster, the BP oil spill is much much more.

The BP oil spill is part of the same problem as the financial crisis: The BP oil spill and the banking crisis are two examples of the era we are living in, the era of corporate anarchy.

In a nutshell, in this era of corporate anarchy, corporations do not have to abide by any rules—none at all. Legal, moral, ethical, even financial rules are irrelevant. They have all been rescinded in the pursuit of profit—literally nothing else matters.

As a result, corporations currently exist in a state of almost pure anarchy—but an anarchy directly related to their size: The larger the corporation, the greater its absolute freedom to do and act as it pleases. That’s why so many medium-sized corporations are hell-bent on growth over profits: The biggest of them all, like BP and Goldman Sachs, live in a positively Hobbesian State of Nature, free to do as they please, with nary a consequence.

The added bonus to this, though, is that the largest corporations have convinced the governments and the people of the “Too Big To Fail” fallacy—they have convinced the world that if they cease to exist, the sky will fall atop our collective heads. So if they fail, they must be saved—without argument, without penalty, and without reform.

Let’s take BP: British Petroleum caused the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. There were various Federal Government agencies charged with supervising their operations—but all of those agencies deferred to BP, before the accident. As a large corporation—one of the largest oil companies in the world—BP operated more or less without any Government supervision. As is emerging, because of this lax and toothless supervision, safety rules and procedures were ignored. Insane risks were taken. No safety contingency plans were drawn up.

From what some memos are saying, disaster was inevitable.

Once the accident happened, BP controlled the information it released concerning the disaster. BP unilaterally decided not to proceed with an immediate top-kill of the well—instead, BP risked a wider disaster, in order to save the oil field by drilling a “relief well”. BP’s reasoning was simple: By implementing an immediate top-kill, BP would have sacrificed the oil field (and lost its investment) in order to save the environment. BP did not do this. Instead, it tried to stretch out the process, so as to salvage the oil field (and the profits) with the “relief well”. But when it became impossible to hide the extent of the damage—when the smell of oil permeated the clear skies of Louisiana a hundred miles from the site of the spill—BP tried to implement the top-kill.

We know how that ended.

Where was Authority? Where was Someone In Charge? The fact was, there was no one in charge. There was no one supervising—or at any rate, the ones who were supposed to be supervising had had their teeth yanked. And BP knew it—so they did whatever they wanted, regardless of the risks, or the costs.

Worst of all, BP realizes that, if it finally cannot get a handle on the oil spill disaster, they can simply fob it off on the U.S. Government—in other words, the people of the United States will wind up cleaning BP’s mess. BP knows that no one will hold it accountable—BP knows that it will get away with it.

No one was holding the banks accountable either. It’s no accident that American and European banks nearly went broke, but banks here in Chile sailed along smoothly: That’s because banks here are regulated up the wazoo. They literally can’t fart without an independent banking inspector supervising them, and then getting a stamped form in triplicate. When Chile’s banks went bust in the crisis of 1980, it put paid to any illusions that the banks knew what they were doing—the government bailed out the banks then, but kept them under glass ever after.

But in Europe and America, the story was the Greenspan Put. Easy Al was so convinced that the banks would “self-regulate” that he pulled the teeth of the Fed, the banks regulatory agency, and let the “free market” have its way.

With this free pass, what do you think the banks did? They went anarchic—they invented all sorts of clever “financial products” that exponentially increased risk, rather than mitigating it. We all saw how that movie ended. When Lehman busted and the credit markets froze, a slap-dash improvised “rescue package” was drawn up, then the \$700 billion TARP, then Quantitative Easing, all of these efforts lubed up with a lot of talk to “strengthening the regulatory environment” and “protecting the financial markets”.

The upshot? The banks did whatever they pleased—with no supervision. And when their recklessness led inevitably to the catastrophe in the Fall of ‘08, the banks got bailed out—with no repercussions. The biggest ones even managed to turn a profit off the tax payer-funded bail-outs!

Even after the worst of the crisis—when the effects of no regulation and no supervision were clearly understood—nothing happened. The zero-regulation, zero-supervision regime continued.

This isn't the case for people, for individuals: People are regulated, people are controlled.

Individuals are supervised and limited in what they can do and say—and no one complains. On the contrary—everyone is relieved, because it protects us all from the unreasonable behavior of an individual.

As an individual, I am limited in countless ways, from the trivial, like jaywalking, to the severe, like murder. I can't even speak up and yell "Fire!" in a crowded theater—I would be arrested for inciting a panic, the general good of avoiding a potentially lethal stampede overriding my need to express myself by yelling "Fire!" when there is none.

Curiously, individuals—ordinary people—are being supervised and regulated more and more stringently. Yet at the same time, corporations are becoming more and more free to do as they please. No one notices how strange this is—we have even lost the social framework to even talk about regulating and supervising corporations, because too many foolish pundits equate supervision and regulation with Socialism. Yet curiously, personal freedom is being chipped away, day by day, without a peep from these pundits.

Meanwhile, the banks run amok.

Meanwhile, BP runs amok.

We can look at other industries—Big Pharma, for one—but there's no real need: Big Pharma will fit the same pattern as BP and the banks. Get so big that you can do whatever you want, and no one will challenge you, not even the government. Carry out practices that will inevitably create a crisis—like unsafe drilling, like toxic bonds—and be confident that you will be bailed out.

Bailed out, and allowed to continue, unfettered. "Allowed" to continue, unfettered? I'm sorry, I mis-spoke: Encouraged to continue, unfettered.

This era of corporate anarchy is reaching a crisis point—we can all sense it. Yet the leadership in the United States and Europe is making no effort to solve the root problem. Perhaps they don't see the problem. Perhaps they are beholden to corporate masters. Whatever the case, in his speech, President Obama made ridiculous references to "clean energy" while ignoring the cause of the BP oil spill disaster, the cause of the financial crisis, the cause of the spiralling health-care costs—the corporate anarchy that underlines them all.

This era of corporate anarchy is wrecking the world—literally, if you've been tuning in to images of the oil billowing out a mile down in the Gulf of Mexico.

I think we are at the fork in the road: One path leads to revolutionary change, if not outright revolution. The other, appeasement and stasis, as the corporations grind the country down.

My own sense is, there will be no revolutionary change. The corporations won. They won when they convinced the best and brightest—of which I used to be—that the only path to success was through a corporate career. No necessarily through for-profit corporations—Lefties never seem to quite get how pernicious and corporatist the non-profits really are; or perhaps they do know, but are clever enough not to criticize them, since those non-profits and NGO's pay for their meals.

Obama is a corporatist—he's one of Them. So there'll be more bullshit talk about "clean energy" and "energy independence", while the root cause—corporate anarchy—is left undisturbed.

Once again: Thank God I no longer live in America. It's too sad a thing, to watch while a great nation slowly goes down the tubes.

Gonzalo Lira, a novelist and filmmaker (and economist) currently living in Chile and writing at [Gonzalo Lira](#)

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Fighting Talk: The New Propaganda

Journalism has become a linguistic battleground – and when reporters use terms such ‘spike in violence’ or ‘surge’ or ‘settler’, they are playing along with a pernicious game

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The U.S. War Addiction: Funding Enemies to Maintain Trillion Dollar Racket

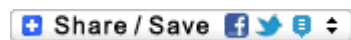
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Paul Farrell: 12 “Dr Dooms” Warning

12 “Dr Dooms” Warning of New Global Market Crash Dead Ahead: Stiglitz, Faber, Grantham, Ferguson, Taleb, Kaufman, Soros, Johnson, Biggs, Shiller

Posted By Paul Farrell [article link](#)

06/21/2010 | Wall Street Warzone

Test time: A neuroeconomic peek inside your brain’s new strategy for the “Doomsday Decade” (2010-2020), while leaving behind the “Lost Decade” (Yes “Lost” because the Dow dropped from 11,722 to 10,428 between 2000 and 2010, while Wall Street got richer wiping out 20% of your retirement money and dumping an estimated \$23.7 trillion on taxpayers in the bailouts). First, check out your brain’s natural bias. Are you an ...

(A) Optimist? As the new decade starts, are you an optimist who trusts Wall Street's advice that 2010 will be a great time to buy stocks. Wall Street says the "Lost Decade" (what a great title) is now behind us. So you believe that the 60% market rally since the March 2009 bottom will continue, with at least 20% gains in 2010.

(B) Pessimist? Or, you're distrustful, cynical and pessimistic about all predictions made by Wall Street's bosses and pundits. You're particularly skeptical of any and all forecasts by the "too-greedy-to-fail" bankers who stole trillions from taxpayers, the Fed and Treasury, then failed to stimulate the economy, and now pocketing mega-bailout bucks as record bonuses, just one year after we saved Wall Street from near-bankruptcy.

This is a simple test of your mindset. Betting odds say most of you will pick answer "A." Why? America was founded by optimists. You believe that a "happy conspiracy" binds politicians, CEOs and Wall Street, making capitalism work and America a powerful nation: So you accept Wall Street's greed, lies and thievery as the price of "free-market capitalism," and part of America's DNA. So you embrace "capitalism-without-morals."

Unfortunately, optimism also blinds us to our individual and national faults: Hidden saboteurs tell us we know more than we do, have amazing skills we don't, and are protected by divine forces against dark enemies and even our own irrational stupidity. Yes, optimism is our inner-enemy that periodically triggers trillion dollar meltdowns.

New Strategy: "Getting back to even" means new risks, more debt, gambling

True optimists are gung-ho about the future, expecting to recover losses and, as Mad Money's Jim Cramer preaches, "get back to even" in 2010. But the problem is: No one has a clue if the market will ever "get back to even." Quite the opposite, since Bernanke is pushing the same optimistic cheap-money fantasies that Greenspan used to create the dotcom and the subprime crashes, we can expect to see the next bubble fizzle and pop, pushing us deep into the dreaded "Great Depression 2" that the Fed and Treasury are trying to avoid by down-streaming today's problems onto future generations.

But soon, future generations will start screaming: "The buck stops here" and revolt when the buck isn't worth much, and they've lost faith in the dollar (just like China). Then the game of musical chairs will end, tragically, sadly, stupidly, unfortunately. Why? Because we failed to stop short of total disaster, failed to prepare, and it's too late.

So to all you optimists who plan to actively invest in 2010 because you accept that America's "capitalism-without-morals" is working in spite of Wall Street's quasi-criminal behavior: Here's some darkside input to factor into your investment equation for 2010 and beyond. Listen closely to the words of our 12 "Drs. Doom." For a moment, take off your rose-colored glasses, step out of your denial, see the "Great Depression 2" dead ahead, really look at the future our "Drs. Doom" see in their "Doomsday Scenarios:"

One. Faber: The "American Empire" has peaked, is on a decline

Hong Kong economist Marc Faber says "the average life span of the world's greatest civilizations has been 200 years ... Once a society becomes successful it becomes arrogant, righteous, overconfident, corrupt, and decadent ... overspends ... costly wars ... wealth inequity and social tensions increase; and society enters a secular decline."

Two. Grantham: Learned nothing, doomed to repeat past, only bigger

Money manager Jeremy Grantham warns that our irrational nightmare will repeat. A year ago we came dangerously close to the "Great Depression 2." Unfortunately, we've "learned nothing ... condemning ourselves to another serious financial crisis in the not too-distant future." We had our bear-market rally. Next, historical cycles plus our irrational behavior guarantees another, bigger global meltdown. We "learned nothing."

Three. Stiglitz: Wall Street creating "short respite" before next crash

Nobel Economist Joseph Stiglitz recently warned: Unless Wall Street's incentive system is drastically reformed, "the financial sector will only try to circumvent whatever new regulations we put in place. We will simply have a short respite before the next crisis." Warning, nothing's changed, it's worse: Lobbyists run Obama, Congress and the Fed.

Four. Johnson: “Running out of time” before “Great Depression 2”

Yes, “we’re running out of time ... to prevent a true depression,” warns former IMF chief economist Simon Johnson. The “financial industry has effectively captured our government” and is “blocking essential reform,” and unless we break Wall Street’s “stranglehold” we’ll be unable prevent a “Great Depression 2.”

Five. Ferguson: Fed’s “easy money” fuels new bubbles, meltdowns

In the 400-year history of the stock market “there has been a long succession of financial bubbles,” says financial historian Niall Ferguson. Who’s the culprit? The Fed: “Without easy credit creation a true bubble cannot occur. That is why so many bubbles have their origins in the sins of omission and commission of central banks.” Another bubble (and crash) is virtually certain, thanks to Washington’s \$23.7 trillion explosion in debt, the Fed’s support for the \$670 trillion shadow banking system, and Wall Street lobbyists getting super-rich thanks to Wall Street’s insatiable greed.

Six. Taleb: Fed haunted by ghost of Greenspan’s failed Reaganomics

When Obama reappointed Bernanke, Taleb warned of a new disaster: “The world has never, never been as fragile,” yet Obama reappoints an economist who “doesn’t even know he doesn’t understand how things work.” New proof? At last week’s American Economic Association, Bernanke was still shifting the blame: “The best response to the housing bubble would have been regulatory, not monetary.” Wrong: He conveniently forgets he was advising Bush earlier, did nothing. Now Obama’s stuck with a Greenspan clone and an insane ideology focused solely on saving a failed banking system by flooding the world with inflated dollars guaranteed to trigger another meltdown

Seven. Soros: Dollar dead as worlds reserve, nest eggs dying

Soros’ New Paradigm: America’s 25-year “superboom ... led to massive deregulation ... blindly chasing free markets ... unleashed excessive greed ... created the dot-com and credit meltdowns” and a “shadow banking system” of derivatives. “The system is broken. The current crisis marks the end of an era of credit expansion based on the dollar as the international reserve currency,” warns Soros. “We’re now in a period of wealth destruction. It is going to be very hard to preserve your wealth in these circumstances.”

Eight. Hedgers: make billions shorting stupid politicians, bankers

Soros isn’t alone. Lots of hedge fund buddies made hundreds of millions and billions betting on the stupidity of Washington with the Fed’s cheap money policies. Alpha magazine reports that four hedgers made more than \$1 billion each in 2008. The top-25 “managers made \$464 million each on average last year ... a kingly sum, especially during a year of global recession, stock market wipeouts and vanishing wealth.

Nine. Shiller: Dotcom, subprime meltdowns, “third episode” next

Shiller a “Dr. Doom?” Remember a decade ago with Irrational Exuberance? Now he’s warning: “Bubbles are primarily social phenomena. Until we understand and address the psychology that fuels them, they’re going to keep forming. We recently lived through two epidemics of excessive financial optimism, we are close to a third episode, only this one will spread irrational pessimism and distrust—not exuberance.”

Ten. Kaufman: Irrationality replaced reason, science, technology

Henry Kaufman was Salomon’s chief economist and “Dr. Doom” for 24 years: “Why are we so poor at managing our key economic institutions while at the same time so accomplished in medicine, engineering and telecommunications? Why can we land men on the moon with pinpoint accuracy, yet fail to steer our economy away from the rocks? Why do our computers work so well, except when we use them to manage derivatives and hedge funds?” Kaufman warns: “The computations were correct, but far too often the conclusions drawn from them were not.” Why? Selfish, myopic politicians and bankers.

Eleven. Biggs: Sell everything, buy guns, food, head for the hills

In his 2008 bestseller, *Wealth, War and Wisdom*, former Morgan Stanley research guru Barton Biggs warns us to prepare for a “breakdown of civilization ... Your safe haven must be self-sufficient and capable of growing some kind of food ... It should be well-stocked with seed, fertilizer, canned food, wine, medicine, clothes, etc ... A few rounds over the approaching brigands’ heads would probably be a compelling persuader that there are easier farms to pillage.” Biggs sounds like an anarchist militiaman.

Twelve. Nations ignore obvious till it's too late, then collapse

The end will be swift. In our age of short-term consumerism and instant gratification, few hear the warnings of our favorite evolutionary biologist, Jared Diamond. Societies fail because they're unprepared, will be in denial till it's too late:

"Civilizations share a sharp curve of decline. Indeed, a society's demise may begin only a decade or two after it reaches its peak population, wealth and power." The warnings were everywhere in 2008, but Greenspan, Bernanke and Paulson were in denial: It will happen again with Obama. Down-streaming problems will fail. Future bubbles get too big, crashes more deadly.

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Saturday, June 12, 2010

[Ray St. Louis: When Corporations Dominate, Bad Happens](#)

When Corporations Dominate, Bad Happens

By Ray St. Louis [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 11, 2010 | North Florida Herald | Information Clearing House

One thing Americans generally agree on is that something is terribly wrong with the country even if they can't agree on what that "something" is.

With the Gulf oil catastrophe getting worse and no end in sight, our government seemingly helpless to address the problem, our fragile economy in danger of slipping back into full recession, America has never seemed so vulnerable.

It's a situation that leads to a lot of finger-pointing. The forward-looking America that could solve any problem with good old Yankee ingenuity seems to have disappeared, and people want to know who's to blame.

Problem is, anytime there's a lot of indiscriminate finger-pointing going on, a lot of those fingers are going to be pointed in the wrong direction.

It's called scapegoating.

It like Rush Limbaugh blaming the Gulf disaster on eco-terrorists without a shred of evidence, or Sarah Palin claiming environmentalists forced the companies to go from shallow to deep water drilling.

Well, they're wrong, just like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson were wrong back in 2001 when they said September 11 was caused by the American Civil Liberties Union.

For the record, the current malaise of the American body politic is not the fault of any of the following groups or individuals: Barack Obama, immigrants, gays, environmentalists, feminists, the United Nations, socialism, the New World Order, ACORN, or the French.

It's not even the fault of international terrorism; you can't blame Osama bin Laden for the Gulf disaster.

So who or what is to blame?

Many times when I get into political discussions with friends and acquaintances, I make the observation that most people don't know who the enemy is. I say that I may not have the answers to all our problems, but at least I know who the enemy is – corporations.

I have recently come to refine that answer. Corporations are merely social structures that exist for a specific purpose much like governments. Governments exist to rule; corporations exist to make money.

The real culprit is much more insidious. It effects the way we, as a people, think. It affects the way we see things.

The primary enemy to the health and well-being of the American republic is (drum roll, please)...corporate hegemony.

Hegemony means dominating influence. When a part of society is said to have hegemony, it means that sector has the influence to make the larger society see things their way.

Their point of view becomes the accepted norm; their way of thinking becomes the conventional wisdom.

Such a situation exists with corporations in 21st century America. Just look at recent developments.

When, in a decision titled Citizens United vs. Federal Elections Commission, the Supreme Court gives corporations the right to unlimited spending on elections, saying the issue is one of free speech, and that corporations enjoy the right to personhood and thus free speech, that's corporate hegemony.

When a major healthcare reform bill is passed, and the plan for a public option is scuttled because lawmakers worry it will create competition to the big insurance companies, that's corporate hegemony.

When a financial reform bill starts making its way through the halls of Congress, and the idea of breaking up the "too big to fail" banks is taken off the table before the debate even gets going, that's corporate hegemony.

And when an oil drilling company is allowed to 'pencil in' its own oil rig inspection reports in an era when government regulation is seen as unwarranted interference with business, that's corporate hegemony.

Once you become sensitive to it, you start seeing corporate hegemony everywhere, from TV commercials (little 30 to 60 second blasts of corporate propaganda) to naming rights on sports stadiums.

You can't ride a bus, read a newspaper, watch a sporting event, or do a single thing in this culture without being assaulted by the corporate point of view.

Our government regulating agencies trusted BP to know what it was doing with regards to deep water drilling and believed the corporation's assurances that it was prepared to handle an emergency.

Basically, they allowed the corporation to regulate itself.

That situation only happens in an atmosphere of total corporate dominance.

We are, as Ralph Nader says, one nation of the corporation, by the corporation and for the corporation.

Ray St. Louis' column, "Between The Lines," is published in The North Florida Herald the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.

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Thursday, June 10, 2010

[Chip Ward: The BP Disaster Marks the End of the Age of Arrogance About the Environment ... Can We Change?](#)

The BP Disaster Marks the End of the Age of Arrogance About the Environment ... Can We Change?

By Chip Ward [article link](#)

June 10, 2010 | AlterNet

We dreamed we were living in a fabulous mansion but are waking up in a greasy gutter. The ecological and economic catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico makes our most infamous oil spill, the Exxon Valdez, look miniscule by comparison. This time we have fouled our nest on an epic scale.

The busted BP pipeline is a watershed event like 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and the collapse of the Ponzi economy. It is not as dramatic as exploding towers, as poignant as those survivors huddled on rooftops awaiting rescue, or as personal for most of us as the loss of a job or home or even a 401K. The devastation to earth's life-support system, the killing of a whole ocean ecosystem across the Gulf, will resonate slowly -- this disaster will be a marathon, not a dash. But make no mistake, we will mark these days as the time we started to learn about ecocide, as a turning point in our realization that our industrial, carbon-dependent way of life is ruinous and cannot last. How many more of these wrenching experiences must we endure before we finally get it and change?

Lesson one: We do not stand above and beyond the boundaries of a finite natural realm that runs through our veins as surely as rivers run down canyons to the sea. The "environment" is not something out there -- we breathe it, we drink it, we eat it. We embody it. Kill it and you sentence your children and grandchildren to the toil and suffering of living and dying on a scorched, contaminated planet of slums.

Lesson two: The term unsustainable tells you the end of the story. What cannot be sustained fails, collapses in on itself. The real apocalypse, not the one imagined by religious zealots but the one happening all around us right now, will be a global phenomenon that plays out locally, especially for those in the direct path of monster storms, ecocidal accidents, war, famine, pandemics, droughts, and all the other nasty surprises yet to come as we keep crossing one environmental threshold after another. Collapse ain't pretty. It is sickening.

The catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico will generate passionate debate. We will critique BP's profit-saving shortcuts and poor safety record, the Bush-era regulators who were literally in bed with oil corporations, and we'll debate any number of other issues, laws, policies, and practices related to the catastrophe. But at the heart of the matter is something much deeper that we must get to. If we want to stop our culture's self-destructive habits and learn sustainable behaviors, if we want to survive our mistakes and thrive tomorrow, then we must shed our hubris and learn to be humble and wise.

The age of hubris, a time when all things are knowable, all problems can be fixed, and all limits surpassed is crashing all around us. We granted ourselves an exemption from the limits of a natural realm where there is only so much fertile soil, so much fresh water, so many fish in the ocean. The atmosphere can only absorb so much CO2 and stay benign. You can shred just so much biodiversity and expect nature to be resilient and recover from the wounds we recklessly inflict.

Yes, we put a man on the moon and every man in a car, at least here in America where we are so privileged. My great-grandfather could not have imagined the middle-class wealth I take for granted and the extent to which we have harnessed carbon to run our world. But, drunk on pride, we are crashing hard now -- oil-stained beaches and marshes are just one

more clear signal that we humans may not be as smart as we assumed. The Crown of Creation is turning out to be a dunce cap.

Our kind of intelligence is undeniable. Humans are very sharp when it comes to all those aspects of the world that are fixed, measurable, happen in a linear progression, and are predictable. That is how, after all, we put a man on the moon. So when dealing with the mechanical realm of physics, our airplanes, dams, computers, chemical finesse, and nuclear machines are wonders to behold.

What we are not good at are all those phenomena that are nonlinear and have emergent behaviors, where, in other words, the whole tends to be greater than the sum of its parts but not predictably so -- things like the climate, ecosystems, fetal development, immune systems, brain function, and swarm behavior. We are only beginning to understand the dynamics of a deeply nonlinear world like feedback loops, thresholds, and basins of attraction. We have a rather myopic view of scales, seeing well what is happening now and predicting what's right around the corner but missing the slow variables that can be more important in the long-run. This is why we deplete soils, turn grasslands into deserts, and use up ancient aquifers and oil deposits in a geological instant.

Our intelligence is also tempered by the human condition. Although we can boast about the scientific prowess we express through our technology and medicine, we are easily distracted by emotional needs for validation, approval, and identity. We compete as much as we compute, greed still drives us, and we can rationalize any destructive behavior. We are easily addicted and not easily satiated. We have been thoroughly indoctrinated by an all-encompassing economic order that is driven by a blind quest for power and profit. There is reason to believe we have been traumatized by our recent history of serial warfare, genocide, and environmental dislocation.

Because we have short memories and a tendency towards denial, collectively we act like amnesiacs, as if every other past civilization or previous empire didn't also think it was smarter than all the others that had preceded it and, unlike them, was immune to failure. Consider that almost everything an intellectual in the sixteenth-century knew for certain has since been proved wrong and almost everything we know for sure today will be radically revised a hundred years hence.

How far back in history do we have to go to find evidence of such wrong-headed hubris? In the 1950s, our knowledge of how the world works was so advanced that we even harnessed the atom, the building block of matter. Confidently and with authority, uranium miners, citizens living downwind from nuclear testing, "atomic GIs," and nuclear weapon workers were told that the low doses of radiation they received were harmless, maybe even beneficial. In the meanwhile, forest fires were suppressed, keystone predators were hunted and eliminated from the land, and DDT was applied without protest to the crops we ate and the front lawns where children played. Lead was added to gasoline. We built so many nuclear weapons that we could destroy life on earth many times over. Ships loaded with old rusty chemical weapons were scuttled and sent to the ocean floor. Engineers were busy draining the Everglades and re-routing its flow through canals. Emotionally distressed patients were lobotomized. That was just fifty years ago, a mere blink of history's eye. Today's genius is tomorrow's fool. Simply put, the world is not only more complex than we thought, it is more complex than we can think.

As Iraq War architect Donald Rumsfeld ironically explained, there's what you know you know, what you know you don't know, and what you don't know you don't know. So, for example, I know my own finances and how to be a librarian. I know I don't know how to run a bank or how to be a surgeon. It is much harder to say what is out there that I haven't even a clue about. But it is how I deal with that question about what I don't know I don't know that determines how much risk I am willing to take, whether I see a need for precaution, and whether I seek alternative options.

The risk assessments that justified BP's deep-water drilling in the Gulf were more than inadequate and dishonest, they were inherently flawed because the uncertainties of the project could not be known and the consequences of failure could not be measured. Formal risk assessments are too often a rubber stamp process designed to give the public unwarranted confidence that industry and regulators understand and can control the complex variables they are considering. Politically, those risk assessments were also inherently flawed because they let BP and its facilitating regulators decide who was put at risk for BP's benefit. Ask a Louisiana shrimper if the distribution of risk, reward, and liability in the Gulf was fair, or if he had a place at the table when those decisions were made.

The so-called precautionary principle, also called the “better safe than sorry” principle, says that we should err on the side of caution when the potential impacts of a mistake cannot be completely understood but could be serious, widespread, and irreversible. Under a precautionary paradigm, we don’t wait until injury and accident happen and then wait even more for incontrovertible conclusions about causes. Instead, the burden of proof is shifted from the potential downwind/downstream victims of a project to the proponents of whatever technology or practice is being proposed. The precautionary path requires alternatives whenever the consequences of a technological project are potentially dire and irreversible.

Capitalists who are accustomed to getting their way no matter what the risks are will squawk that such requirements are radical, time-consuming, and too expensive. But in light of what is happening in the Gulf today, the precautionary paradigm can no longer be dismissed as some whacko notion for clog-wearing Europeans and San Francisco liberals. Precaution is plain common sense. As my grandma liked to say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

The need for precaution increases apace with technological prowess. It wasn’t enough, for example, that we altered the very DNA of seeds, like splicing fish genes into strawberries, or that we gave plants characteristics nature would never allow, like herbicide resistant corn. At this very moment, artificial cells, stripped of their natural genetic codes in favor of computerized DNA, are growing in labs. We will make new life forms and set them loose. Will we be shocked if that goes awry and takes down whole species, crops, soils? When the mistake that was never supposed to happen happens and cannot be recalled?

For individuals, the collapse of the Age of Hubris is experienced as a profound and disturbing lack of confidence. You don’t know who to trust, what to believe, and what will happen next. You suspect that everything you thought you knew is wrong. The serial shocks our culture has been enduring from 9/11 through the financial turmoil of the last years and now this wholesale destruction of habitat generate doubt and fear that the media echo back to us. All that paranoid ranting, conspiracy thinking, demonizing, noise, and distortion that dominate our civic dialogues these days may be more symptomatic of our era than its cause, but such feedback also reinforces doubt and fear in a vicious feedback loop.

The collapse of confidence isn’t necessarily bad even if it feels that way. Humility can lead to sustainable paths the way hubris led us over the cliff. Precaution is as wise as it is humble. It can spur us to find better outcomes for the earth and all its creatures. And since a humble heart is also a compassionate one, perhaps we can heal the human realm as well. We will discover that our best bet to make it through the turmoil ahead is one another because mutual aid is and has always been the key to our resilience. To say that we must learn to live within limits is not to say our lives will be diminished but that they will acquire new meaning, insight, purpose, and values.

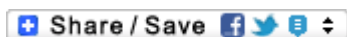
Starting over is tough. We will drag a lot of baggage down the road -- attitudes and assumptions, habits and desires, history, contracts, alliances, and obligations. The first step is the hardest; admitting that what we thought we knew was wrong and that there is so much more we don’t know than we assumed. Until now, pride easily trumped precaution. The sickening images of ecocide we are experiencing today may change that.

Who knows, we may even start treating the planet like our lives depended on it.

Chip Ward is a former library administrator, grassroots organizer, citizen-activist, and the author of *Canaries on the Rim* and *Hope’s Horizon*. He now writes from Torrey, Utah.

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Thursday, June 10, 2010

Robert S. Becker: Committing “Ecocide:” Tipping Point Between Evolution or Extinction?

Committing “Ecocide:” Tipping Point Between Evolution or Extinction?

By Robert S. Becker [article link](#)

08 June, 2010 | Countercurrents

To echo A.J. Toynbee, civilizations fall not by getting murdered by outsiders: they tend to commit suicide first. Judging by our example, so do advanced species. The good news: earthlings need not dread the shocker of meteor collisions, volcanic eruptions, outer space invaders (talk about illegals!), or pernicious, end of times Raptures. Final Judgment looks more like an epilogue than cause for concern.

Ecocide, the ruination of our ecosystems, is wounding us grievously, the upshot of political and corporate mismanagement, overpopulation, climate dislocation, and collective choices – done with a shocking disregard for how fragile, and exceptional, life is. Life, at its core defined by sustainability, is the extreme exception in a cosmos of rocks and gases and dark energy.

Too bad if we exit before the aliens show up, for they’d be fun compared to collisions or eruptions. What remote species would target an overheated planet, anyway? Forget “too big to fail” or “failed states” – what about a failing species that shoots itself in its habitat, bleeds copiously, and naively waits for “relief wells.” What happens to a species clever enough to despoil its life supports but too stupid to realize avoiding calamity is the real order of the day?

The Oil Spill, and Joke’s On Us

Worst of all, for this holier-than-thou, nature-abusing culture, every oil spill singles out one culprit: avaricious, over-reaching mankind, plagued by the insupportable presumption we know what we are doing. Beyond immediate damage, this spill unearths the underlying outrage: an entire industry ambushed by an inevitable, predictable outcome. Simple recipe: allow deregulation, use defective materials, never fund robust clean-up techniques, and bingo: one debacle a generation spaced far enough apart to be forgotten by the next. Very like nuclear leaks, airplane crashes, mining collapses, and the panoply of human “accidents.”

Nor can anyone complain, “we weren’t warned,” as scientists by the boatload squawk about rising temperatures, ocean levels, carbon cycles, altogether threatening fisheries, shorelines and clean water. Scars visible from space – from strip mining, clear-cutting, tropical deforestation and oil spills – reveal more about our behavior than press conferences spewing forth misinformation. True, we’ve improved some air quality (while acidifying the oceans) and restored some lakes and rivers (no longer flammable but hardly drinkable).

That result, in great part, reflects exporting pollution: outsourcing displaces not just jobs but the impacts from dirty manufacturing, smelting and mining. It’s one globe, stupid. Take farming lowly shrimp, now Asian grown in ways so drastically unsustainable polluters simply poison one pristine site, then move down the coast, saving millions on mitigation. Less Gulf shrimping means more damage to Asian coastlines, and I predict shrimp will become, like whales, marker species of planetary health.

Drilling: Gambling with Life

We use lotteries to fund education, so why not high-risk gambling to fill our gas tanks? No fundamentalist terrorism, here or abroad, can yet match the havoc from the Bush-Cheney conspiracy with criminal drillers. Ecocide breaks all budgets, impacting billions of living creatures, probably permanently.

Notably, the growing Gulf tar pit is not the exception to the rule, but the rule, only one of hundreds of oil spills annually. Our top government guy calls spreading oil “the enemy,” likewise one newscast forecast a “war against oil” invasions. Yet, this is no war (though it drives others) but planet and life abuse, and we stand no chance against nature, finding its own equilibrium oblivious to us.

I agree: the irony is getting as thick as tar. One high-risk wildcatter hit a gusher, hooray! Except, instead of collection for fuel, gross dereliction turns positives into massive negatives. Double irony: leaving BP in charge of clean-up is like passing live grenades to errant toddlers. Note, how BP’s infantile terms fit futile fixes: top hat, hot tap, top kill, and junk shot. Why not razzle-dazzle, hell’s bells and topsy-turvy?

More Homer Simpson Than Spock

Increasingly, our species is betrayed by our own rationality, as we fabricate disruptive machinery but employ them with such disregard for consequences we defy the logic of their creation. Certainly, we underestimate the penalties for dishonoring the immutable laws of physics and chemistry, which, ironically every year, are ever more precisely depicted by top scientists.

Buffeted by Tea Parties, are we shocked at Duke University research from Dan Ariely: human decision-making (the conscious stuff) favors not “hyper-rational Mr. Spock” but the “fallible, myopic, vindictive, emotional, biased Homer Simpson”? Apparently, species “top kill” starts from underneath our top hat; our hot brain taps are full of junk shots, repulsed by planning, to a greater degree (more irony) as the potential for damage rises (warming, germ warfare, nukes).

Does human irrationality, plus adoration of comfort, not explain why our president shuns the best collective summons against against tragedy? I refer to today’s great taboo: conservation, using less energy, the cheapest, easiest, most universal option. Sacrifice itself would define community, offering redemption to impossible losses, ecosystem, wildlife, or livelihood. Irreplaceable loss calls for grieving, not faux reassurances and more denial. When does this president address consumption, the demand (and pricing) that drives our mad quest to punch holes in the earth’s skin and, then, like children, hope against hope for the best. Like suffering only a few oil spills, not too large, once in a while.

But now we have the worst and, if it takes years to stop the gushing, this dazzling omission mutely judges any assumption elected leaders know how to lead. We have slavish presidents, whether unclever ones like W., or well informed ones like Obama, who look upon threats wholly through political prisms, to be endured without confronting real causes.

What, Us Worry?

Of course, it’s not just Americans who barge ahead, willy-nilly, addicted to new inventions but not fail-safes or scientific red lights. Can we survive if we already threaten planetary health after only 500 years of industrialism, a whisker of time? Measured by population and dominance of the earth, human numbers are breathtaking, yet beware this difference: “lower” animals overpopulate, run out of food or spread disease, and 90% die off. Or go extinct (like 99% of those species once alive), yet their earthly tenure did not deny the earth freedom to liberate the next experiment, like us.

Like any trainwreck, oil spills make good TV because destruction comes so fast, a painful contrast to the millions of years oil takes in the making. Not with a bang, but incremental whimpers, we are going where no species has gone before: making our planet unlivable for complex beings for an indeterminant duration. For how long can we bet our lives, and our species, on the dubious proposition a future genius will save us from ourselves, or resolve the audacity of growth. These days, state lotteries look like a better gamble: someone on earth at least takes home the prize.

Wednesday, June 9, 2010

[David Korten: The Great Turning](#)

The Great Turning: Epic Passage

by David Korten [article link](#)

Our time is a defining moment for the human species. We have a brief window of opportunity to navigate the passage from a 5,000 year [Era of Empire](#) characterized by violent domination to an Era of [Earth Community](#) characterized peaceful partnership. This passage to a new level of species maturity promises a more secure and fulfilling life for everyone. Its successful navigation requires that we free ourselves from the illusions of a [cultural trance](#) that blinds us to the higher order potentials of our human nature.

We now have an unprecedented opportunity to turn the human course. This opportunity is born of a convergence of the imperative created by a potentially terminal global crisis and the possibility created by a global communications revolution.

A Three-Fold Crisis

The cause of the crisis is three-fold.

* [Over consumption](#): Growth in human consumption resulting from a combination of population growth and growth in consumption per capita is depleting the natural life support system of the planet, disrupting natural water cycles and climate systems, and threatening human survival.

* [Inequality](#): Unconscionable and growing concentration of financial power in a world of ever more intense competition for a declining base of material wealth is eroding the social fabric to the point of widespread social breakdown.

* [Pathological Governing Institutions](#): The most powerful institutions on the planet, global financial markets and the transnational corporations that serve them, are institutions of Empire dedicated to growing consumption and inequality. They convert real capital into financial capital to increase the relative economic power of those who live by money, while depressing the wages of those who produce real value through their labor. These institutions respond to environmental and social crises with palliatives that side step the need to reduce overall consumption and reallocate resources from rich to poor. To do otherwise would be contrary to their legal and financial imperatives. We cannot expect the institutions that got us into the crisis to get us out of it.

We face the imperative to:

1. Reduce aggregate consumption, which means renouncing economic growth and obsessive over consumption as our defining economic priority in favor of meeting real human needs, including needs for dignity, community and meaningful work.
2. Eliminate extremes of inequality, which means renouncing domination as our defining mode of organization in favor of equity and deep democracy.
3. Transform our institutions and cultures to support reduction of consumption, conversion of financial capital into natural, social, and human capital, and expansion of the middle class through redistribution of wealth from rich to poor.

Imperative as Opportunity

There is significant evidence that for all our apparent differences, most all the world's people want the same thing: happy healthy children, families, communities, and natural systems. Properly understood, the imperative creates an unprecedented opportunity to unleash long suppressed potentials of the human consciousness to bring forth the world for which we humans have long shared a deep yearning. See "[What will Earth Community look like?](#)"

The sacrifices are marginal relative to the potential gain. Mostly we must give up wasteful or actively destructive forms of consumption to free up resources for uses that actually increase our happiness and well-being. It involves, for example, reallocation from:

- * Instruments of war to health care and environmental rejuvenation.
- * Automobiles to public transportation.
- * Suburban sprawl to compact communities and the reclamation of forest and agricultural land.
- * Advertising to education.
- * Financial speculation to local entrepreneurship.

Such a radical reallocation is far beyond the realm of current political feasibility. The work of making it feasible begins with a conversation. Fortunately, that conversation is already underway in localities all over the world, spreading the good news that the world we must now create to secure the human future is the same as the world most all the world's people want.

We face a race against time between the awakening of an Earth Community consciousness and the spread of social and environmental collapse. Our [window of opportunity](#) could slam shut at any time with chilling finality.

An Irrevocable Choice

Success depends on facing up to the extent to which the crisis is a consequence of deep social and institutional pathology. Although green technologies will have an essential role, there is no technological fix. The fate of our children turns on our current irrevocable choice between two contrasting ways of relating to one another and Earth.

The Way of Empire features a pyramid of coercive power based on principles of domination and exclusionary private accumulation. It is the way of domination, greed, violence, wasted lives and environmental devastation. Left in place, it is destined to play out as a last man standing imperial competition for what remains of Earth's natural bounty.

The Way of Earth Community features self-organizing networks based on principles of partnership and a cooperative sharing of Earth's resources to create a world that works for all. It is the way of partnership, sharing, reconciliation, mutual responsibility, and respect for all life.

How we choose will determine whether those who follow us will refer to our time as the Great Turning or the Great Unraveling.

Competing Stories

Empire's power depends on its ability to control the [cultural stories](#) and the [language](#) that shape our collective understanding of our world and of the choices available to us as a species. Empire stories induce a kind of cultural trance that conditions us to accept the dominator relations of Empire as just and righteous and to dismiss talk of alternatives as naïve, dangerous, or even sinful. Once we recognize the truth that Empire stories deny, the trance is broken. To change the future, change the story.

Global Awakening

The institutions of Empire will not act from within to voluntarily relinquish their power. Leadership for the turning must come from popular civic initiatives centered outside the institutions of Empire.

Empire has always met resistance from those with a larger vision of human possibility. Jesus, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. were among the more visible examples. Mostly, this resistance was geographically isolated and the institutions of Empire contained or co-opted it. No longer. Modern communications technology has obliterated the barriers of geography and is linking ordinary people into a seamless global web of learning and sharing unfiltered by imperial agents and institutions. Millions of people of every race, religion, and nationality are now using this technology to create a species capacity to choose and act as a whole in the service of life, as documented by Paul Hawken in [Blessed Unrest](#).

Earth Community Agenda

Our collective future turns on the success of the efforts of ordinary people with an awakened consciousness to advance the three primary elements of a bold Earth Community agenda.

1. [Earth Balance](#): Bring human consumption into balance with Earth's natural systems by eliminating unproductive consumption and by restoring and even enhancing Earth's natural regenerative processes.
2. [Fair Share/Equity](#): Bring our human relationships into balance with one another by sharing of resources and knowledge equitably and turning from a culture of competition and private accumulation to a culture of cooperation and sharing.
3. [Living Democracy](#): Create a system of radically democratic life-serving governing institutions that support Earth Balance and Fair Share, give voice to every person, and nurture the higher order potentials of the human consciousness. (see below)

We are engaged in the greatest and most creative adventure in all of the human experience. It is a race against time. The window of opportunity is closing fast. Accelerating social and environmental collapse creates the imperative to act with deliberate speed to accelerate the awakening and focus the positive life energy it is unleashing.

In these dangerous and often frightening times it is important to regularly remind ourselves that we are privileged to live at the most exciting moment of creative opportunity in the whole of the human experience. The time is now. We have the power. We are the ones we have been waiting for.

Living Democracy

A healthy society balances individual liberty with a mutual accountability that nurtures Earth Balance and Fair Share. We in the United States have generally stressed the individual liberty side and consequently reduced democracy to a competition between narrowly defined short-term private interests. This has led to rule by a global financial market that recognizes only the short-term financial interests of the very wealthy and actively disrupts the relationships of mutual caring essential to social health.

Human well-being and survival depend on learning to think and act as a radically democratic living Earth Community in which we share our resources to balance the interests and well-being of the self with the interests and well-being of the whole. Vandana Shiva and Frances Moore Lappé call it living democracy. (See [Living Democracy Movement](#).) We create living democracy by rebuilding the relationship of strong, caring communities and advancing supportive institutional reforms such as the following.

Living Indicators: It is odd that we choose to measure our collective well-being and progress by financial indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP) or a favored stock index rather than by living indicators of the health and happiness of our children, families, communities, and nature — measures of true well-being. As ecological economist Joshua Farley notes, GDP is actually a measure of the financial cost of maintaining a given level of health and happiness. Seeking to maximize GDP makes no more sense than trying to maximize health care costs. A rising stock index is a measure of the rate at which the wealthy few are increasing their exclusionary claims against the real wealth on which all our lives depend, hardly something to celebrate in a world in desperate need of greater equity.

Democratic Elections: An open, fair, and honest electoral system is essential to any form of meaningful democracy. An electoral system that depends on corporate money and turns third party candidates into spoilers creates an appearance of democracy at the expense of real democracy. Public financing of elections, a secure right of every person to vote and have their vote counted, assured media access, instant runoff voting, proportional representation, elimination of the electoral college, and barring corporations from seeking to influence elections and legislation are all basic democratic reforms essential to bringing democracy to the United States.

Accountable Corporations: Corporate forms of organization that aggregate resources under coherent management are essential to any modern society. At the same time, without built-in safeguards of public accountability, the resulting concentration of power is subject to abuse by the unprincipled. Guided by a false ideological premise that the single-minded pursuit of individual profit maximizes the well-being of the whole, we have created corporate forms with no such safeguards. [The only reason for government to grant a corporate charter](#) allowing a unified aggregation of power and resources is to serve a public purpose. An Earth Community corporate charter would specify the public purpose for which it is granted and provide for revoking the charter of any corporation that fails to fulfill its public purpose or abuses its powers.

Public Service Media: The broadcast spectrum is a public commons properly used to serve the public interest. Allowing a few private media corporations to monopolize it to promote narrow private interests and create a culture of individualism, greed, violence, and material excess does not serve the public interest. Independent public and community radio and TV stations representing a diverse range of perspective should receive a substantial preference in allocating the broadcast spectrum over absentee corporate owners.

Advertising: The proper role of business in Earth Community is to provide Earth friendly products and services in response to human needs, not to create artificial wants. Advertising beyond informing the public of the availability and features of available products and services has no legitimate place and is not a legitimate business expense. Simply banning advertising would raise complex Constitutional free speech issues. There is no Constitutional barrier, however, to requiring that the costs of advertising beyond providing basic information on product availability and specifications be paid from after tax revenues, the same as other forms of speech.

Local Stakeholder Ownership: Absentee ownership mediated by global financial markets strips decision-making of all but short-term financial values and exclusive private interests. Eliminating absentee ownership, broadening ownership participation, and breaking up unaccountable concentrations of corporate power are foundational to living democracy. A progressive tax on assets combined with tax breaks for firms owned and managed on a cooperative model by their employees, customers, and those who live in the communities where they are located would provide appropriate market incentives. Making absentee owners personally liable for harms caused by the corporations in which they hold shares would also create a powerful incentive for such restructuring.

Honest Money: The existing debt-money system is history's most successful [con game](#). Run by private bankers devoted to the financial interests of themselves and their wealthiest clients, it gives banks the power to create money out of nothing by lending it into existence. As demonstrated by the recent mortgage lending meltdown, banks find it highly profitable to use this power to finance financial speculation and fraud that reward and enrich social and environmental predators. See "[The ABCs of Finance Capitalism](#)."

An honest money system creates money in return for the creation of public value when government spends it into existence for public goods like infrastructure and education. It distributes money equitably to facilitate life-serving exchange and enriches society by creating a capacity to finance public goods without taxes or borrowing.

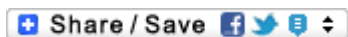
Replacing debt-money with honest-money is one of the most important elements of an Earth Community agenda. It is also one of the most difficult to implement, because debt-money serves powerful interests and its ability to scam the public is invisible to most of its billions of victims.

David Korten is co-founder and board chair of YES! Magazine and author of *Agenda for a New Economy*, *The Great Turning*, and *When Corporations Rule the World*.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [7:28 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Tuesday, June 8, 2010

[Mike Whitney: Europe Chooses Depression](#)

Europe Chooses Depression

By Mike Whitney [article link](#)

June 07, 2010 | Information Clearing House

Forget about a smooth recovery. Finance ministers and central bank governors of the G-20, met this weekend in Busan, South Korea and decided to abandon "tried and true" expansionary fiscal policies for their own strange brew of belt-tightening policies and austerity measures. The EU members are eager to restore the illusory "confidence of the markets", something that will surely be lost when the eurozone slides back into recession and the hobbled banking sector begins hemorrhaging red ink. Trimming deficits while the economy is still on the mend will weaken demand and force businesses to lay off more workers. That will decrease economic activity and slow growth. It's a prescription for disaster.

Here's an excerpt from Paul Krugman's blog: "Slashing spending while the economy is still deeply depressed is both an extremely costly and quite ineffective way to reduce future debt. Costly, because it depresses the economy further; ineffective, because by depressing the economy, fiscal contraction now reduces tax receipts....

The right thing, overwhelmingly, is to do things that will reduce spending and/or raise revenue after the economy has recovered — specifically, wait until after the economy is strong enough that monetary policy can offset the contractionary effects of fiscal austerity. But no: the deficit hawks want their cuts while unemployment rates are still at near-record highs and monetary policy is still hard up against the zero bound." ("Lost Decade, Here We Come", Paul Krugman, New York Times)

Europe is marching headlong into a depression. The attachment to stone age economics is shocking. It is as if John Maynard Keynes never lived. When GDP shrinks--as it inevitably will--the deficits will grow and bond yields will widen making it more expensive to fund business. Public confidence will wane, relations between member states will sour, and cities will fill with angry demonstrators. Fiscal consolidation will rip the 16-state EU apart and trigger a crisis bigger than Lehman Bros. The ECB needs to support demand by encouraging government spending while households patch their tattered balance sheets and regulators take over underwater banks. Any deviation from this plan will only exacerbate the problems.

How sick is the EU banking system? Here's an excerpt from the New York Times:

"It's a \$2.6 trillion mystery. That's the amount that foreign banks and other financial companies have lent to public and private institutions in Greece, Spain and Portugal, three countries so mired in economic troubles that analysts and investors assume that a significant portion of that mountain of debt may never be repaid.

The problem is, alas, that no one — not investors, not regulators, not even bankers themselves — knows exactly which banks are sitting on the biggest stockpiles of rotting loans within that pile. And doubt, as it always does during economic crises, has made Europe's already vulnerable financial system occasionally appear to seize up. Early last month, in an indication of just how dangerous the situation had become, European banks — which appear to hold more than half of that \$2.6 trillion in debt — nearly stopped lending money to one another...."

Analysts at the Royal Bank of Scotland estimate that of the 2.2 trillion euros that European banks and other institutions outside Greece, Spain and Portugal may have lent to those countries, about 567 billion euros is government debt, about 534 billion euros are loans to nonbanking companies in the private sector, and about 1 trillion euros are loans to other banks. While the crisis originated in Greece, much more was borrowed by Spain and its private sector — 1.5 trillion euros, compared with Greece's 338 billion. ("Debtors' Prism: Who Has Europe's Loans?", Jack Ewing, New York Times)

This proves that the real problem is the banks, not "sovereign debt". (which is only 567 billion of the 2.2 trillion euros total) The EU is faced with the same problem as the US; either take over insolvent banks and restructure their debt--making bondholders and equity holders take a haircut--or endure years of hellish subpar economic performance with high unemployment, dwindling investment, grinding deflation and social unrest. The EU has chosen the latter, and for reasons which may not be that clear at first glance. A cheaper euro makes EU exports more competitive, which will keep the EU's most powerful member (Germany) happy. Also, deflationary policies protect the interests of bondholders who are heavily invested in financial institutions whose asset values are grossly inflated by cheap money and massive leverage. Finally, austerity measures transfer the losses from banks and shadow banks onto the backs of workers, consumers and retirees. Screwing workers to enrich bondholders and bankers is a political calculation. It makes no economic sense.

Belt-tightening in the EU means that the world will (again) have to rely on the US consumer to bounce back, shrug off his historic burden of personal debt, and resume spending like a madman. With unemployment hovering at 10%, credit lines being slashed by the day, and retirement just around the corner (for many baby boomers); that looks like an unlikely prospect.

Key Indicators of a New Depression

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The Phantom Recovery

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by Zach Carter [article link](#) [article link](#)

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Europe in the Iron Grip of Neoliberal Fiscal Discipline and Anti-Labor Measures

by Chronis Polychroniou [article link](#)

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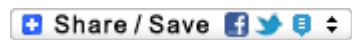
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Derrick Z. Jackson: The Price of the Pelican

The Price of the Pelican

by Derrick Z. Jackson [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 8, 2010 | The Boston Globe | CommonDreams

The subtitle of the BP oil spill is the Price of the Pelican. We will never fully know the cost of this spill to wildlife and wetlands, because it will continue its slow-motion rampage long after the lawyers have settled. Rowan Gould, the acting director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, said the spill “in all likelihood will affect fish and wildlife resources in the Gulf and across the North American continent for years, if not decades to come.”

We also will never fully know the spill’s cost because of its unprecedented depth of 5,000 feet below the water’s surface in the Gulf of Mexico, beyond the reach of sunlight and human beings. Rich Ambrose, the director of the environmental science and engineering program at UCLA, told the Associated Press that he fears the worst impacts will be to zooplankton and invertebrates that fuel the fisheries in the deep. Roger Helm, the head of Fish and Wildlife’s contaminants division, told the New Orleans Times-Picayune, “What we know about spills up to this point in time is almost entirely based on surface releases or near-surface releases. We don’t understand exactly how the oil is moving from depth up, whether it breaks into a zillion little particles or droplets or whether it comes up in a stream.”

A study in the journal Science, conducted 14 years after the Exxon Valdez ran aground in Prince William Sound in 1989 and fouled 1,300 miles of Alaskan coastline, found that pink salmon, sea otters, harlequin ducks were either still dying or not reproducing at “astounding” rates. Exxon settled with the federal government and the state of Alaska in 1991 for \$1 billion for environmental restoration, but lead researcher Charles Peterson of the University of North Carolina said toxic levels of oil from the disaster continued to contaminate the food chain for wildlife in “surprisingly large” hidden pools in sediment and underneath boulders.

Yet, Exxon’s lawyers fought for nearly 20 years against any punitive responsibility for the disaster, until it was able to convince the conservative Supreme Court to slash a \$5 billion jury award for damages down to \$508 million, which made it easy for them to agree to pay an additional \$470 million in interest. Thus one can take no assurance from BP that it will, as it states in its nationwide ad campaign, “make this right.” It is less assuring, if that is possible, that two years from now, you will see BP specialists “combing the shore along with US Fish and Wildlife, NOAA and Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries.”

No, the price of pelicans, marshes, zooplankton, and fish is up to others. Last week, the United Nations, in eerie timing, published a report that found that the world’s ecosystems are worth \$72 trillion a year, comparable to the world’s gross national income, but that nearly two-thirds of them are degraded. The report said the world’s wetlands have an economic value of \$7 trillion, that is, if we keep them healthy from activities such as oil drilling.

“Many of the world’s key crops, such as coffee, tea and mangoes are dependent on the pollination and pest control services of birds and insects,” the report said. “. . . ecosystems such as sea-grasses, tidal marshes and tropical forests are also important in removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.”

In a microcosm of this, the Fish and Wildlife Service estimated that 35 million people visited our national wildlife refuges in 2006, spending \$1.7 billion in their regional economies and generating or maintaining 27,000 jobs. The reports asked,

“Can a dollar figure — a price tag, if you will — be attached to people’s dawning understanding of the marvelous workings of the natural world? What’s it worth to maintain and preserve the habitat?”

The BP disaster presents a perfect time to answer these questions, as wildlife experts scramble to save oiled pelicans, turtles, and other creatures. The fact that we yet cannot answer the question should be even more cause for the federal government to maintain a moratorium on offshore oil drilling. The Exxon Valdez should have taught us that.

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The Oil Firms' Profits Ignore the Real Costs

The energy industry has long dumped its damage and, like the banks, made scant provision against disaster. Time to pay up by George Monbiot [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 8, 2010 | The Guardian/UK | CommonDreams

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:45 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Monday, June 7, 2010

Chris Hedges: The Christian Fascists Are Growing Stronger

The Christian Fascists Are Growing Stronger

By Chris Hedges [article link](#)

Jun 7, 2010 | Truthdig

Tens of millions of Americans, lumped into a diffuse and fractious movement known as the Christian right, have begun to dismantle the intellectual and scientific rigor of the Enlightenment. They are creating a theocratic state based on “biblical law,” and shutting out all those they define as the enemy. This movement, veering closer and closer to traditional fascism, seeks to force a recalcitrant world to submit before an imperial America. It champions the eradication of social deviants, beginning with homosexuals, and moving on to immigrants, secular humanists, feminists, Jews, Muslims and those they dismiss as “nominal Christians”—meaning Christians who do not embrace their perverted and heretical interpretation of the Bible. Those who defy the mass movement are condemned as posing a threat to the health and hygiene of the country and the family. All will be purged.

The followers of deviant faiths, from Judaism to Islam, must be converted or repressed. The deviant media, the deviant public schools, the deviant entertainment industry, the deviant secular humanist government and judiciary and the deviant churches will be reformed or closed. There will be a relentless promotion of Christian “values,” already under way on Christian radio and television and in Christian schools, as information and facts are replaced with overt forms of indoctrination. The march toward this terrifying dystopia has begun. It is taking place on the streets of Arizona, on cable news channels, at tea party rallies, in the Texas public schools, among militia members and within a Republican Party that is being hijacked by this lunatic fringe.

[Elizabeth Dilling](#), who wrote “The Red Network” and was a Nazi sympathizer, is touted as required reading by trash-talk television hosts like Glenn Beck. Thomas Jefferson, who favored separation of church and state, is ignored in Christian schools and soon will be ignored in Texas public school textbooks. The Christian right hails the “significant contributions” of the Confederacy. Sen. Joseph McCarthy, who led the anti-communist witch hunts of the 1950s, has been rehabilitated, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is defined as part of the worldwide battle against Islamic terror. Legislation like the new Jim Crow laws of Arizona is being considered by 17 other states.

The rise of this Christian fascism, a rise we ignore at our peril, is being fueled by an ineffectual and bankrupt liberal class that has proved to be unable to roll back surging unemployment, protect us from speculators on Wall Street, or save our dispossessed working class from foreclosures, bankruptcies and misery. The liberal class has proved useless in combating the largest environmental disaster in our history, ending costly and futile imperial wars or stopping the corporate plundering of the nation. And the gutlessness of the liberal class has left it, and the values it represents, reviled and hated.

The Democrats have refused to repeal the gross violations of international and domestic law codified by the Bush administration. This means that Christian fascists who achieve power will have the “legal” tools to spy on, arrest, deny habeas corpus to, and torture or assassinate American citizens—as does the Obama administration.

Those who remain in a reality-based world often dismiss these malcontents as buffoons and simpletons. They do not take seriously those, like Beck, who pander to the primitive yearnings for vengeance, new glory and moral renewal. Critics of the movement continue to employ the tools of reason, research and fact to challenge the absurdities propagated by creationists who think they will float naked into the heavens when Jesus returns to Earth. The magical thinking, the flagrant distortion in interpreting the Bible, the contradictions that abound within the movement’s belief system and the laughable pseudoscience, however, are impervious to reason. We cannot convince those in the movement to wake up. It is we who are asleep.

Those who embrace this movement see life as an epic battle against forces of evil and Satanism. The world is black and white. They need to feel, even if they are not, that they are victims surrounded by dark and sinister groups bent on their destruction. They need to believe they know the will of God and can fulfill it, especially through violence. They need to sanctify their rage, a rage that lies at the core of the ideology. They seek total cultural and political domination. They are using the space within the open society to destroy it. These movements work within the confining rules of the secular state because they have no choice. The intolerance they promote is muted in the public assurances of their slickest operators. Given enough power, and they are working hard to get it, any such cooperation will vanish. The demand for total control and for a Christian nation and the refusal to permit any dissent are on display within their inner sanctums. These pastors have established within their churches tiny, despotic fiefdoms, and they seek to replicate these little tyrannies on a larger scale.

Many of the tens of millions within the Christian right live on the edge of poverty. The Bible, interpreted for them by pastors whose connection with God means they cannot be questioned, is their handbook for daily life. The rigidity and simplicity of their belief are potent weapons in the fight against their own demons and the struggle to keep their lives on track. The reality-based world, one where Satan, miracles, destiny, angels and magic did not exist, battered them like driftwood. It took their jobs and destroyed their future. It rotted their communities. It flooded their lives with alcohol, drugs, physical violence, deprivation and despair. And then they discovered that God has a plan for them. God will save them. God intervenes in their lives to promote and protect them. The emotional distance they have traveled from the real world to the world of Christian fantasy is immense. And the rational, secular forces, those that speak in the language of fact and evidence, are hated and ultimately feared, for they seek to pull believers back into “the culture of death” that nearly destroyed them.

There are wild contradictions within this belief system. Personal independence is celebrated alongside an abject subservience to leaders who claim to speak for God. The movement says it defends the sanctity of life and advocates the death penalty, militarism, war and righteous genocide. It speaks of love and promotes fear of damnation and hate. There is a terrifying cognitive dissonance in every word they utter.

The movement is, for many, an emotional life raft. It is all that holds them together. But the ideology, while it regiments and orders lives, is merciless. Those who deviate from the ideology, including “backsliders” who leave these church organizations, are branded as heretics and subjected to little inquisitions, which are the natural outgrowth of messianic movements. If the Christian right seizes the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government, these little inquisitions will become big inquisitions.

The cult of masculinity pervades the movement. Feminism and homosexuality, believers are told, have rendered the American male physically and spiritually impotent. Jesus, for the Christian right, is a muscular man of action, casting out demons, battling the Antichrist, attacking hypocrites and castigating the corrupt. This cult of masculinity, with its glorification of violence, is deeply appealing to those who feel disempowered and humiliated. It vents the rage that drove many people into the arms of the movement. It encourages them to lash back at those who, they are told, seek to destroy them. The paranoia about the outside world is stoked through bizarre conspiracy theories, many championed in books such as Pat Robertson's "[The New World Order](#)," a xenophobic rant that includes attacks on liberals and democratic institutions.

The obsession with violence pervades the popular novels by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. In their apocalyptic novel, "[Glorious Appearing](#)," based on LaHaye's interpretation of biblical prophecies about the Second Coming, Christ returns and eviscerates the flesh of millions of nonbelievers with the sound of his voice. There are long descriptions of horror and blood, of how "the very words of the Lord had superheated their blood, causing it to burst through their veins and skin." Eyes disintegrate. Tongues melt. Flesh dissolves. The Left Behind series, of which this novel is a part, contains the best-selling adult novels in the country.

Violence must be used to cleanse the world. These Christian fascists are called to a perpetual state of war. "Any teaching of peace prior to [Christ's] return is heresy..." says televangelist James Robinson.

Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, instability in Israel and even the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are seen as glorious signposts. The war in Iraq is predicted, believers insist, in the ninth chapter of the Book of Revelations, where four angels "which are bound in the great river Euphrates will be released to slay the third part of men." The march is inevitable and irreversible and requires everyone to be ready to fight, kill and perhaps die. Global war, even nuclear war, is not to be feared, but welcomed as the harbinger of the Second Coming. And leading the avenging armies is an angry, violent Messiah who dooms hundreds of millions of apostates to a horrible and gruesome death.

The Christian right, while embracing a form of primitivism, seeks the imprint of law and science to legitimate its absurd mythologies. Its members seek this imprint because, despite their protestations to the contrary, they are a distinctly modern, totalitarian movement. They seek to co-opt the pillars of the Enlightenment in order to abolish the Enlightenment. Creationism, or "intelligent design," like eugenics for the Nazis or "Soviet" science for Stalin, must be introduced into the mainstream as a valid scientific discipline—hence the [rewriting of textbooks](#). The Christian right defends itself in the legal and scientific jargon of modernity. Facts and opinions, once they are used "scientifically" to support the irrational, become interchangeable. Reality is no longer based on the gathering of facts and evidence. It is based on ideology. Facts are altered. Lies become true. [Hannah Arendt](#) called it "nihilistic relativism," although a better phrase might be collective insanity.

The Christian right has, for this reason, its own creationist "scientists" who use the language of science to promote anti-science. It has fought successfully to have creationist books sold in national park bookstores at the Grand Canyon and taught in public schools in states such as Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas. Creationism shapes the worldview of hundreds of thousands of students in Christian schools and colleges. This pseudoscience claims to have proved that all animal species, or at least their progenitors, fit on Noah's ark. It challenges research in AIDS and pregnancy prevention. It corrupts and discredits the disciplines of biology, astronomy, geology, paleontology and physics.

Once creationists can argue on the same platform as geologists, asserting that the Grand Canyon was not created 6 billion years ago but 6,000 years ago by the great flood that lifted up Noah's ark, we have lost. The acceptance of mythology as a legitimate alternative to reality is a body blow to the rational, secular state. The destruction of rational and empirically based belief systems is fundamental to the creation of all totalitarian ideologies. Certitude, for those who could not cope with the uncertainty of life, is one of the most powerful appeals of the movement. Dispassionate intellectual inquiry, with its constant readjustments and demand for evidence, threatens certitude. For this reason incertitude must be abolished.

"What convinces masses are not facts," Arendt wrote in "Origins of Totalitarianism," "and not even invented facts, but only the consistency of the system which they are presumably part. Repetition, somewhat overrated in importance because of the common belief in the masses' inferior capacity to grasp and remember, is important because it convinces them of consistency in time."

Augustine defined the grace of love as *Volo ut sis*—I want you to be. There is, he wrote, an affirmation of the mystery of the other in relationships based on love, an affirmation of unexplained and unfathomable differences. Relationships based on love recognize that others have a right to be. These relationships accept the sacredness of difference. This acceptance means that no one individual or belief system captures or espouses an absolute truth. All struggle, in their own way, some outside of religious systems and some within them, to interpret mystery and transcendence.

The sacredness of the other is anathema for the Christian right, which cannot acknowledge the legitimacy of other ways of being and believing. If other belief systems, including atheism, have moral validity, the infallibility of the movement's doctrine, which constitutes its chief appeal, is shattered. There can be no alternative ways to think or to be. All alternatives must be crushed.

Ideological, theological and political debates are useless with the Christian right. It does not respond to a dialogue. It is impervious to rational thought and discussion. The naive attempts to placate a movement bent on our destruction, to prove to it that we too have "values," only strengthens its legitimacy and weakens our own. If we do not have a right to be, if our very existence is not legitimate in the eyes of God, there can be no dialogue. At this point it is a fight for survival.

Those gathered into the arms of this Christian fascist movement are desperately struggling to survive in an increasingly hostile environment. We failed them; we owe them more: This is their response. The financial dislocations, the struggles with domestic and sexual abuse, the battle against addictions, the poverty and the despair that many in the movement endure are tragic, painful and real. They have a right to their rage and alienation. But they are also being used and manipulated by forces that seek to dismantle what is left of our democracy and abolish the pluralism that was once the hallmark of our society.

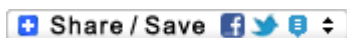
The spark that could set this conflagration ablaze could be lying in the hands of a small Islamic terrorist cell. It could be in the hands of greedy Wall Street speculators who gamble with taxpayer money in the elaborate global system of casino capitalism. The next catastrophic attack, or the next economic meltdown, could be our [Reichstag fire](#). It could be the excuse used by these totalitarian forces, this Christian fascism, to extinguish what remains of our open society.

Let us not stand meekly at the open gates of the city waiting passively for the barbarians. They are coming. They are slouching toward Bethlehem. Let us shake off our complacency and cynicism. Let us openly defy the liberal establishment, which will not save us, to demand and fight for economic reparations for our working class. Let us reincorporate these dispossessed into our economy. Let us give them a reality-based hope for the future. Time is running out. If we do not act, American fascists, clutching Christian crosses, waving American flags and orchestrating mass recitations of the Pledge of Allegiance, will use this rage to snuff us out.

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Chris Hedges, who writes a column every Monday for Truthdig and who graduated from Harvard Divinity School, is the author of *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America*. He was a reporter for many years with The New York Times. His latest book is *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*.

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Michael Lerner: Are We Ready to Change Directions?

Liberals and Progressives Never Miss an Opportunity to Miss an Opportunity...

Are We Ready to Change Directions?

By Michael Lerner [article link](#)

June 5, 2010 | Tikkun | AlterNet

Progressives have had four enormous opportunities in the past two years to change the fundamentals of American society and our relationship to the world. We've already blown the first and are missing the second, third, and fourth.

The first, of course, was the economic meltdown.

What a moment that could have been for progressives in Congress or the White House to challenge the ideology of "leave it to the marketplace" or "leave it to the states" to work things out. Imagine if President Obama had told Wall Street and the Republicans, "OK, let's test your theories right now -- let's just let the marketplace work its wonders as the banks fail." And had they pleaded for relief, it should have been given on the condition that they enthusiastically and simultaneously back and help implement a single-payer health care plan; the creation of a national bank to fund no-interest loans to people on the verge of losing their homes from deceptive mortgage loan offers and to fund socially useful and environmentally sound new projects to offset unemployment; the funding of a massive new WPA-style full employment program to encourage small businesses and to make sure that everyone who wants to work can use their talents in ways that are societally useful; and the creation of a whole new set of laws restricting banking and investment company operations to make them respond to the needs of the society and not just to the profit motivations of their investors. Well, that chance was blown.

The second opportunity is now being blown by the Obama administration: the Gulf oil spill.

Here is a moment in which the logic of capitalist exploitation of the planet is exposed for everyone to see.

The president should be calling this a national emergency as serious as that of 9/11, and should declare a war on those who are destroying the environment. He should call for a special session of Congress and ask for emergency powers to suspend any corporate activity here or abroad that threatens the planet, under his war powers and as a manifestation of his sworn obligation to protect and defend the United States.

Obama should explain to the American people that we are literally living through what environmentalist Paul Wapner calls "the end of nature" unless we change the fundamentals of how we organize our global economy and our relationship to the planet. Instead of seeing Earth as a resource for human exploitation, we need to think of Earth as our very bodies. We need to think of the damage we do to it as similar to cutting off our own limbs. We need to cultivate in ourselves and each other the capacity to respond to the universe with awe, wonder, and radical amazement at the grandeur and mystery of All That Is.

That conception should be matched by environmental policies aimed at cutting carbon emissions to 350 parts per million in the next ten years, scrapping "pollute and trade" for a powerful carbon tax, creating a national environmental board that must verify that every product made or sold in the United States is produced, marketed, and sold in an environmentally sound way with an ES (environmentally sound) sticker, eliminating all trade agreements that favor the United States at the expense of local farmers around the world, directing U.S. armies to serve as part of a UN Force with the mandate to prevent the destruction of rain forest and other environmentally vital parts of the globe, and implementing a Global Marshall Plan to eliminate the extremes of poverty and hunger that contribute to some of the poor being willing to cut down the rainforest just so that they can (quite reasonably) feed their own families.

The third opportunity remains: the decision of the Supreme Court in its Citizens United ruling.

In this ruling to overturn constraints on corporate donations to candidates for office, the right-wing majority in the court boldly proclaimed that corporations are persons, that persons' speech is protected by the first Amendment, and that spending money is a form of speech.

More than 80 percent of U.S. voters oppose that decision and understand that its implementation is likely to end the last vestiges of democratic openness in American society and replace it with corporate advertising manipulation of our consciousness.

The process of undermining democracy and control of elections by the corporations and elites of wealth and power was already quite advanced before this recent Supreme Court decision, so if we confine our attention to overthrowing Citizens United we will not thereby restore real democracy in the United States.

Unfortunately, most progressive and liberal groups are following this mistaken path. They correctly understand that any legislation on the issue of democracy for ordinary people and not for corporations is likely to be overturned by the right-wing court we have at the moment. But then they propose narrowly framed amendments to the constitution that would do little more than return us to the status quo ante.

The ESRA: Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

For that reason, we at Tikkun and our educational arm, the Network of Spiritual Progressives, will be putting forward a new approach. We are inviting secular progressives and liberals to join with spiritual or religious liberals and progressives at a Strategy Conference in Washington, D.C., June 11-13, to develop a coherent strategy for the Obama years ahead. And a central part of that strategy is a campaign for the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment (ESRA) to the U.S. Constitution (visit www.spiritualprogressives.org/conference for more info).

The first article, the pro-democracy clause, of the ESRA proclaims that protection of freedom of speech only applies to human beings, and that money shall not be considered a form of speech. It then goes on to regulate the expenditure of money in elections and to fund national elections, to prohibit anyone from buying time or space in the media during the three months before the election, and to mandate major media to provide equal and free time to major candidates, along with other steps to ensure that differentials in money will no longer be a factor in determining how much of a candidate's message is communicated to voters.

The second article is the corporate environmental and social responsibility clause. This would require corporations with incomes of over \$100 million per year (not smaller companies or "mom and pop" stores) to get a new corporate charter every five years. The charter would only be granted to those that can demonstrate a satisfactory history of environmental and social responsibility (toward its workers and toward the communities in which it functions) to a jury of ordinary citizens chosen at random (because we already know that regulatory agencies become dominated by representatives of the very corporations that are supposed to be regulating). Employee groups and stakeholder groups from wherever that corporation or its products reach, along with corporate management, would present their information about the level of corporate environmental and social responsibility.

A "positive requirement to enhance human community and environmental sustainability" constitutes article three. Most notable in this article is that it requires any school that receives federal support to teach the skills and capacities necessary to develop a caring society manifesting love, generosity, kindness, joy, celebration, thanksgiving, forgiveness, nonviolence, rational and scientific thinking, awe and wonder at the universe, and the recognition that our well-being depends on the well-being of everyone on the planet and the well-being of the Earth itself. It further mandates the teaching of all knowledge and skills required to assure that all students can contribute to the implementation of policies that enhance the long-term sustainability of Earth.

It will take just as long to pass the shorter more narrowly framed attempts to overthrow Citizens United as it will to pass this broader ESRA version. Yet in the actual struggle for change, the ESRA goes far deeper and is far more likely to stir the enthusiasm of the American people and the activists necessary to carry a campaign for constitutional reform to every corner of the country. What Obama should have learned during the fight for health care reform is that the full weight of corporate power gets mobilized just as heavily for moderate reform as it would for a more appealing, broader, and deeper reform. And the broader reform, precisely because it spells out what we are seeking, is much more likely to generate popular support and to educate people along the way to a vision of a more democratic and more environmentally responsible society.

The fourth opportunity: Israel's May 31 attack on the Gaza aid flotilla.

Israel's attack on the Gaza aid flotilla has provoked worldwide attention to the unjust blockade of some food, clothing, building materials, and other essentials for the people of Gaza, who are living under extremely oppressive conditions, as well as attention to the more general issue of the Occupation of the West Bank by Israel. This is a perfect moment for progressive forces to push for an international conference of all the relevant stakeholders and countries of the world that helped create Israel in the UN vote of November 1947 to now develop a peace plan that provides security for Israel and full national self-determination for the Palestinian people. It's the moment for a peace plan that involves a Palestinian state on all of the West Bank and Gaza, that enables the sharing of Jerusalem, and that secures justice for the Palestinian people in the form of massive reparations to Palestinian refugees all around the world. This is the moment for the peoples of the world -- together with the economic, political, and military power of the U.S. -- to impose a solution, and that is what we must publicly call on Obama and the Democratic Party to pursue.

We at the Strategy Conference of Liberals and Progressives next weekend in Washington, D.C., will be holding a memorial service for those killed by the Israeli assault, as well as a prayer service for those hurt or wounded (including Israeli soldiers who were sent by an idiotic and self-destructive Israeli military/political elite to commit this unjustified assault). We will be praying not only for their speedy recovery, but also for the freeing of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit by Hamas and the freeing of thousands of Palestinian prisoners by Israel. This will take place at a rally across from the White House on Sunday, June 13, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Lafayette Park.

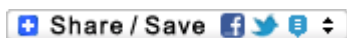
The suffering of both Palestinian and Israeli peoples will not be brought about by the lame process of negotiations with the United States unwilling to use its power to push Israel. Given the realities of the current Congress, there is no hope that President Obama will exercise the needed leadership by himself, but we could push him into an international framework that gives him the legitimacy to use American power in defense of a rational solution that is fair to both sides.

This is not the moment for progressives to waste our energies denouncing Israel, though we certainly have reason to be angry at what Israel has been doing for these past 43 years since the 1967 conquest of Palestine—it is the moment for us to put forward a rational plan to once and for all end this conflict. Will we waste this opportunity as well?

Rabbi Michael Lerner is editor of Tikkun and author of *The Left Hand of God: Taking Back Our Country from the Religious Right* (HarperSanFrancisco, Feb, 2006).

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[Shamus Cooke: Social Crisis in America](#)

Social Crisis in America.

Coming Soon: Corporate Town Halls Against Social Security

by Shamus Cooke [article link](#)

June 6, 2010 | Global Research | Workers Action

In the old days the U.S. government used different tactics to trick the population into accepting policies that only the elite wanted. For example, it took legions of hired speakers (propagandists) to travel the country and to explain to people the “necessity” of fighting WWI and WWII. Movie stars were put on the government payroll, too, dazzling and awe-striking working people into buying war bonds and constantly cheerleading the war effort.

Not much has changed. Although the corporate-controlled media is a highly effective tool to influence the public to accept wars-for-profit (Iraq and Afghanistan), some policies are so unpopular they require the old tactics be revived.

Take for instance Social Security. The corporate-elite have written tirelessly on this subject recently. They agree that it should be reduced, and that you should wait until you reach an older age before receiving it. Working people disagree.

Thus, a series of national “town halls” has been organized to convince people of the “necessity” of this policy (usabudgetdiscussion.org). The stated purpose is to have a national “discussion” to figure out ways to best deal with the nation’s budget deficit.

But instead of the government organizing these town halls, the corporate establishment will – a fact that reveals much about the deterioration of democracy in the U.S.

The group organizing the national town halls is the “non-partisan and non-profit” America Speaks. But scratching the surface of this purportedly harmless group reveals a corporate snake pit. America Speak’s Board of Directors and National Advisory Board showcase an impressive list of corporate CEO’s, CFO’s, consultants, politicians, and elite law firms. Not a single voice from working people is to be found.

Even more revealing are the groups funding the town halls: all private, elite foundations, such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Kellogg cereal), and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (John D. was one of the wealthiest men in America when he died).

The Kellogg Foundation is most notorious for spearheading the attack on public education. Along with the Bill Gates foundation and others, the Kellogg Foundation gives vast sums of money to encourage the formations of for-profit charter schools.

The MacArthur Foundation is especially interested in Social Security. On its website the foundation explains its interest in the politics of aging, while giving support to the “bi-partisan” solution being proposed by Democrats and Republicans, outlined in the book, *Choosing the Nation’s Fiscal Future*, written by a variety of “experts” belonging to different corporate think tanks and other elite groups (www.ourfiscalfuture.org).

Here is a partial description of *Choosing the Nation’s Fiscal Future*:

“This comprehensive book considers a range of policy changes that could help put the budget on a sustainable path: reforms to reduce the rate of growth in spending for Medicare and Medicaid; options to reduce the growth rate of Social Security benefits or raise payroll taxes; and changes in many other government spending programs and tax policies.”

Page 112 of the book says:

“Commonly discussed changes to reduce the future growth of [Social Security] benefits include: raising the full-benefit retirement age and the earliest retirement age; reducing the additional benefit percentage for spouses; reducing the postretirement cost-of-living adjustment; increasing the number of years used to compute average earnings; and changing the way initial benefit levels (i.e., at retirement) are calculated so that they grow more slowly than wages for higher earners.”

The book also discusses ways to reduce the cost of Medicare at the expense of Medicare recipients.

These are the ideas that will dominate not only the national town hall meetings, but President Obama’s National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, which is a “bi-partisan” group to give Congress recommendations to reduce the budget deficit.

In reality, Obama's hand picked group is full of anti-Social Security right-wingers combined with corporate Democrats and — most shamefully — the recently retired President of Service Employees International Union, Andy Stern. The conclusions of Obama's commission are forgone, which is why they will not be released until after the fall elections.

Social Security and Medicare are the two bedrock programs of the U.S. social safety net. They are incredibly popular, having been won after immense social struggle in the 1930's and 1940's. It will take another struggle now to maintain and expand them — a fight that cannot be waged within the political party that first enacted the programs.

The Democrats are working hand-in-hand with the Republicans to enact these measures, as they did with the corporate bailouts, Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and years of lowering the taxes of America's rich — all policies that have created the U.S. budget deficit.

Making phone calls or writing letters to Democratic congressmen will not save Social Security and Medicare, since corporate groups have already written these politicians large checks.

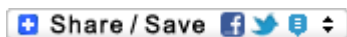
The fight to save these valuable social programs — along with public education, transportation, and social services in general — must be brought to the streets, where working people can unite and demand that the corporations and the rich pay for the crisis they created — through progressive taxation — so that the social safety net can be saved and expanded for the vast majority of people. All labor unions and working-class community groups have a duty to organize their members towards this effort.

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Shamus Cooke is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [7:45 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Sunday, June 6, 2010

[Mark Morford: Behold Our Dark, Magnificent Horror](#)

Behold Our Dark, Magnificent Horror

by Mark Morford [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 4, 2010 | San Francisco Chronicle | CommonDreams

There is, you have to admit, a sort of savage grace, a tragic and terrible beauty, to the BP oil spill.

Like any good apocalyptic vision of self-wrought hell, the greatest environmental disaster in U.S. history has its inherent poetry. You see that creeping ooze of black, that ungodly wall of unstoppable darkness as it slowly, inexorably invades the relatively healthy, pristine waters adjacent, and you can't help but appreciate the brutal majesty, the fantastic, reeking horror of this new manifestation of black death we have brought upon ourselves, as it spreads like a fast cancer into the liquid womb of Mother Nature herself.

Really, it's not just the [incredible photographs](#) of the spill that are, in turns, heartbreaking, stunning, otherworldly and downright Satanic in their abject revulsion. It's not just the statistics that tell us how many millions of gallons might ultimately be spilled, or the [stunned scientists who can only hypothesize](#) how this unprecedented catastrophe might affect the fragile food chain and distress the ocean's ecosystems at the very root level.

It's not even the endless, heartrending tales of livelihoods lost, industries destroyed, coastlines ravaged or wildlife killed. The fact is, any one of these aspects alone is enough to poison your soul for as long as you wish to wallow in that murky state of fatalism and doom. It is nothing but bleak.

I think the most disturbingly satisfying thrill of this entire event -- and it is, in a way, a perverse thrill -- comes from understanding, at a very core level, our shared responsibility, our co-creation of the foul demon currently unleashed.

What a thing we have created. What an extraordinary horror our rapacious need for cheap, endless energy hath unleashed; it's a monster of a scale and proportion we can barely even fathom.

Because if you're honest, no matter where you stand, no matter your politics, religion, income or mode of transport, you see this beast of creeping death and you understand: That is us. The spill may be many things, but more than anything else it is a giant, horrifying mirror.

Do you wish to try and deflect it? Lay responsibility elsewhere? Really? We can't quite blame an "act of God," as we would for some sort of hurricane or tsunami inflicted upon meager humankind by an angry deity, punishing us all for being too war-like, violent or perhaps naïve enough to want to enjoy the sunshine for five goddamn minutes before He decided He'd better kill some people lest we forget who's in charge.

We cannot blame evil terrorists, some cluster of swarthy foreigners who hate our shopping malls and secretly envy our Porsche Cayenne's. Nor can we blame the spill on some sort of nefarious conspiracy, a secret act wrought by devious agents in black helicopters designed to destabilize the U.N. and induce universal mind control -- unless, of course, you're getting a little desperate and don't get outside much, in which case, [you absolutely can](#).

Finally (and a bit shockingly), I'm not hearing Pat Robertson or any of his cretinous cult of apocalypticans blame the gays, or voodoo, or anal sex, or reality TV for what's happening in the Gulf. Oil is, after all, completely non-denominational. It mocks all religions equally -- except, of course, the only one that really matters: capitalism.

This is how you know this is one of the more universally damning disasters of our time: No one really seems to know how to process it, much less react. The GOP is backtracking like terrified hyenas from Sarah "Queen of Duh" Palin's "drill baby, drill" mantra/ass tattoo, as suddenly the incessant Republican wail for more oil exploration, more drilling, more tax cuts for oil conglomerates don't just reek of the usual inbred cronyism; they reek of death and destruction the likes of which the country has never seen.

On the other hand, hardcore lefties are going mad with desire that the disaster will lead to the immediate imprisonment of every BP employee worldwide, as if BP is somehow any different than any other oil titan raping the planet right now (hi, Alberta's oilsands). Hardcore lefties would also appreciate it if Obama would use the disaster as a surefire excuse to instantly change the entire course of energy history by immediately shutting down [all 48,000 oil wells](#) in the Gulf and hand every American a bicycle and a solar panel. See? All better.

Sure. As if oil wasn't woven like oxygen into every single aspect of American life, as if fully 30 percent of domestic transportation fuel didn't come from the gulf, as if shutting down a fraction of those wells wouldn't re-devastate the economy, as if petroleum and coal weren't powering the very energy plants that deliver the electricity that charges the iPhones that allows everyone to Tweet their angry complaints through all the various energy-sucking server farms the size of a small country.

Truly, BP is behaving no better or worse than any other corporate spawn of Satan would in a similar situation. What's more, if you don't think every oil company on earth is right now kneeling before Beelzebub in gratitude that it wasn't one of their own wells that exploded, you haven't been paying attention.

That said, after all is said and done, it's gloomily nice to think our darkest disaster in a generation could somehow ultimately improve our attitudes, change our behavior, lighten our violent treatment of the planet. As someone recently noted, the BP spill isn't Obama's Katrina, it's actually Big Oil's Chernobyl. Meaning: a disaster so appalling and devastating it might very well alter the industry and change the course of our energy policy forever.

Is it possible? Or, more accurately, are we even capable of such a shift? Is there any silver lining to be found in that black and greasy gloom? This is, perhaps, the most imperative question of all: If we can produce a demon of such extraordinary scale and devastation, can we not also somehow create its exact opposite? Let us pray.

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Mark Morford's Notes & Errata column appears every Wednesday and Friday on SFGate and in the Datebook section of the San Francisco Chronicle.

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If There Was Ever a Moment to Seize

Will Obama Stand Up to Big Energy in Deeds as Well as Words?

by Bill McKibben [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 6, 2010 | TomDispatch | CommonDreams

TomDispatch [home page](#)

350.org [home page](#)

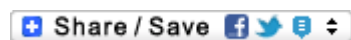
America's Spiritual Suicide

By Mary Hamer, M.D. [article link](#)

05 June, 2010 | Countercurrents

*MISSION STATEMENT: This paper is about America's addiction to oil & the tragic consequences of this obsession -- that has led to the Gulf of Mexico Oil spill. This American addiction to oil, Oil wars, the Autoculture & other excessive Oil consumption diseases are leading to America's overdose & suicide. What is the cause of this deadly fossil fuel habit? The cause of this lust for oil is America's lack of respect for the Earth. Due to the finite nature of this natural resource & increasing global demand for oil, America is starting to experience delirium tremens withdrawal symptoms. Only an Intervention, detoxification & a spiritual transformation will cure America's craving for fossil fuels. In this essay, I investigate the Gulf of Mexico Oil spill & I show how Leaders have acted irresponsibly in 3 main categories of: Legal, Moral & Psychological conduct. For example, for a leader to say that: He did not think an oil spill was possible is: #1. In a legal sense irresponsible, #2 in a moral sense unethical, #3. in a psychological sense arrogant & #4 in a business sense a failure to consider a "Worse case scenario" & a "Plan B". America's 2009 Nobel Peace Prize was a distraction to more important issues such as Middle East peace & enforcing offshore oil drilling safety guidelines. What motivates me to write an article such as this one? Every day I wake up to the Violence & cruelty that humans cause to the Earth, to the Animals, the trees, the oceans & to human victims -- & I cry out to the universe for all the pain & suffering Homo Sapiens cause other living beings & to the Earth. ...

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Saturday, June 5, 2010

SurvivalBlog: Why the "Smartest Men in the Room" are Worried

Studying TEOTWAWKI (The End Of The World As We Know It)

Why the "Smartest Men in the Room" are Worried

by F.S. [article link](#)

June 4, 2010 | James Wesley Rawles | SurvivalBlog

The purpose of this article is to lay out the intellectual underpinnings of what I will call the neosurvivalist movement. The target audience is those individuals either beginning, or considering to start, preparations for broad societal emergencies. The intended result is to demonstrate that far from being a fringe or extremist movement, neosurvivalism is rational and has emerged as a natural result of broader social, cultural, and technological circumstances grounded in specific historical and contemporary thinking.

This movement goes by many names, including survivalism, prepping, emergency preparedness, and so-called “offgrid” or “resilient communities.” Businesses and governments are likewise investing in continuity of operations plans, disaster mitigation, and disaster response. Everyone it seems is concerned about the permanency of civilization. While the focus of these groups varies – some are more “green” and “sustainability” focused, others are profit motivated, still others fit the traditional media stereotype of militant and self-defense orientated loners – all are worried about the fragile and interconnected nature of modern society and understand that the interconnectedness of our civilization is its major weakness.

In recent American memory the fundamental game changers were the dual warnings of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. These two events demonstrated that man-made and natural disasters could seriously disrupt a modern society, and that governmental plans were insufficient to respond quickly to large scale events. These events have spawned a large and growing body of work on emergency response and mitigation. The flagship publication is the *Journal of Emergency Management*, an excellent source of articles running the full gamut of neosurvivalist concerns, a mission shared since 1993 (in the wake of the governmental failure to properly respond to Hurricane Andrew) by the Federal Emergency Management Higher Education Program, itself designed to research and educate in areas of emergency planning concerns.

During the Cold War national attention was focused on fallout bunkers and bomb shelters and there was little public interest in broader problems associated with societal collapse until the mid-90s. That it has now reached a point of near universal concern at operational and strategic planning levels is most evident in the last couple of years. While the nuclear Civil Defense Programs of the 1950s and 1960s are well-known, there was little focus by federal planners on other societal threats until the creation of FEMA in 1979, which slowly expanded from almost purely nuclear civil defense to the current focus on “full spectrum” and or “integrated all-hazards” disaster response. Prior to this it was assumed local and state agencies would lead disaster response, and they often did not. Cold War preparations assumed a Federal-Individual partnership, in which the government assisted individuals by preparing “self-help” programs for citizens’ protection. The classic example was the backyard bomb shelter for individual families, a mitigation program continued today with state block grants usable for individual family safe rooms or in-ground tornado shelters. To highlight the American public’s general unwillingness to prepare, at the height of the Cold War fewer than 3% of the population had taken any personal measure to defend against radioactive fallout. Current assessments (following the U.S. Government’s introduction of the “Ready” preparedness program in 2003) of those likely to prepare for disasters typically include the following characteristics:

1. Pays attention to the news
2. Aware of and concerned about socio-environmental threats
3. Has personal experience with disasters
4. Has children in the home
5. Has strong community relationships (church, civic organizations, etc.)
6. Has disposable income available to make preparations

These characteristics are important because the surge in neosurvivalism is often attributed to religious, suburban professionals with families. These are the people, to be frank, with the awareness, good sense, and money necessary to make preparations capable of producing a meaningful result.

As much as government agencies and private industry have embraced a general preparedness philosophy in recent years, it often seems as if academia largely undermines civil defense strategy. Books such as *The Imaginary War*, *One Nation Underground*, and *Bracing for Armageddon* seek to ridicule and discredit preparedness concepts in general, arguing the government cannot be trusted to deal truthfully with the public on such measures (a mantra most obvious in the media frenzy over the “duct tape and plastic” advisement issued by the new Department of Homeland Security in 2003). That this view often emanates from those corners which often wish for more government and more governmental control – a schizophrenic position perched perilously on the anti-nationalism ideas of Eric Hobsbawm and Ernest Gellner, and the liberal-democratic faith in deterministic concepts of man’s inevitable progress. It’s important to consider that media treatments of private individuals engaged in preparedness typically attack along these lines – suggesting that preparedness is a statement of little faith in the government to handle emergencies, and that individuals that do so are dangerous or at least hold dangerous ideas. At the same time, the media typically depicts governmental agencies and programs as necessary, particularly if their budgets are cut. Often journalists interview academics who seem to invariably fall in line with depictions more appropriate for Cold War interpretations of governmental malfeasance than the day-to-day realities of a post-9/11 and Katrina world. This and raw political partisanship explains much of the disconnect the average American feels about his place in society. That this can manifest in profoundly important political ways (such as the “Security Moms” so often depicted in the media in 2004) only adds to the lack of clarity in the general consciousness of the population.

Fundamentally, Americans having been asking themselves questions such as “Is it wise to prepare for disaster? If so, how much is enough? To what degree should I believe the government or the media?” Journalists and leftist academics generally provide a negative reply.

It’s important to understand that the above actually represents a very small contrarian academic view, and that generally academic specialists support the conclusions of neosurvivalism. Researchers such as Tainter, Diamond, and Zartman all find the modern state as an incredibly imperiled and fragile edifice. Joseph Tainter’s *The Collapse of Complex Societies* follows in the footsteps of earlier historians such as Oswald Spengler’s *Decline of the West* and Arnold Toynbee’s *A Study of History* in that it predicts that societies do not enjoy “progress” endlessly, that eventually societies reach a point of diminishing returns when solutions to their problems invariably cost so much that they create more serious problems. This is an assessment shared by Vaclav Smil in his book *Global Catastrophes and Trends*. Smil foresees a connection between global stability and energy consumption; military and economic engines are powered by the energy source of the nation, a reduction in which can create substantial geopolitical problems. Peak Oil researchers will find much to agree with in Smil’s work.

Jared Diamond is a Pulitzer Prize winning academic whose work *Guns Germs and Steel* was followed by his equally impressive *Collapse: How Human Societies Fail or Succeed*. Diamond comes down on the side of environmentalist fears as a major threat to human civilization, though to his credit he’s more than willing to entertain a joint effort at sustainability with corporations. That Diamond’s *Collapse* has received positive reviews buttresses the idea that societies can indeed fail, and that human action or inaction can cause that collapse. Posner’s book, *Catastrophe: Risk and Response*, comes to similar conclusions as Diamond, and his exploration of events which can wipe out humanity and how we should rationally respond to them is a remarkable read.

William Zartman’s book *Collapsed States* uses post-colonial African Nations as the subject for his study of how nations cannot easily be put back together. Once a polity collapses, he ominously predicts, only a powerful outside force can reestablish its authority, and even the success of such operations is spotty at best (as U.S. adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan can attest). The typical result is ongoing instability, tribalism, and intranational violence. Zartman is supported by R.J. Rummel’s work on what he calls “democide” in his book *Death by Government*, which demonstrates that failed states are generally highly active in either perpetrating or supporting genocide. Mary Kaldor comes to similar conclusions in her work, including her excellent book *Old Wars, New War*. Fearing one’s government as an agent of violence against its own citizens is not paranoia – it’s an academically supported position, and a cause célèbre of the Amnesty International and its supporters.

Finally, consider the concept of societal collapse, something that Mr. Rawles (SurvivalBlog) and many others write about. This too is a well-studied and supported concept in academia. George Mason University economist Robin Hanson has this to say about it: “While there are many kinds of catastrophes that might befall humanity, most of the damage that follows large disruptions may come from the ensuing social collapse, rather from the direct effects of the disruption.” He also goes on to say that “if individuals vary a lot in their resistance [to disaster], however, then it may pay to increase the variance in such resistance, such as by creating special sanctuaries from which the few remaining humans could rebuild society.” Archaeologists Harvey Weiss and Raymond S. Bradley have said that “The archeological and historical record is replete with evidence for prehistoric, ancient and pre-modern societal collapse. These collapses occurred quite suddenly and frequently involved regional abandonment, replacement of one subsistence base by another (such as agriculture by pastoralism) or conversion to a lower energy sociopolitical organization (such as local state from interregional empire).” Thomas Homer-Dixon’s work, such as *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* maintains (as an extreme simplification) that environmental scarcity results, ultimately, in violence (something Smil and many other scholars have concluded). That these scarcity issues cannot always be solved is something Homer-Dixon explores in his book *The Ingenuity Gap*. The result is fragmentation and destruction, if not extinction.

What I have attempted to do here is layout the academic and intellectual work that has been done in support of neosurvivalism. This is necessarily only a short introduction to the topic, and it focuses only on the academic research angle, the books published largely through academic presses such as Oxford University Press, MIT Press, and Princeton University Press. These books are read mostly by policy makers and planners, generally not by journalists or non-specialists. The reason I have focused on these is to inform the general neosurvivalist community of the immense support that government and academia provide for them as they make individual contingency plans. When faced with family members and others who are dubious about the practice of emergency preparedness, a library stocked with the texts I listed above may be the very best tools available because they may help convince loved ones of the importance of emergency preparedness.

In closing, the U.S. government has been urging American citizens to prepare for nuclear war since 1947, for all-hazards emergencies since the late 1970s, for terror attacks since 1999, and for national health disasters, such as pandemics, since 2006. Every U.S. state has a disaster management agency, which often has funds available for disaster mitigation in individual homes. The Red Cross urges emergency preparedness as well, including the requirement for two weeks of food at home and one gallon of water per person per day, as well as the packing of an evacuation bag, with three days food and water in it. The reason people do not prepare is because they do not match the criterion I listed above – they either do not have the disposable income (meaning they choose to spend family funds on other priorities) or they are unaware of the dangers to which they are exposed. In addition, academic researchers from the best universities have produced copious evidence to support any number of rational preparation schemes, to include preparation for total societal collapse. Following the recommendation of the government disaster planning agencies and the scholars who specialize in studying disasters is the result of neither paranoia nor foolhardiness. It is prudent, logical, and rational. Pretending none of this is an actual threat, and refusing to make even the most basic preparations, is lunacy.

The following academic texts may prove interesting to the general survival community. These are not “how-to” survival texts, but nevertheless are books very worth the reading because they help the reader to understand the potential survival situation which may result from a disaster or societal collapse. (And this alone is an invaluable service for emergency planners, institutional or individual.) Those marked with an asterisk are, in the author’s opinion, especially useful:

- * David W. Orr, *Down to the Wire: Confronting Climate Collapse*
- * Johan M. Havenaar, *Toxic Turmoil: Psychological and Societal Consequences of Ecological Disasters**
- * Robert A. Stallings, *Methods of Disaster Research*
- * Havidan Rodriguez, *Handbook of Disaster Research*
- * Piers Blaikie, *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability and Disasters**
- * Maxx Dilley, *Natural Disaster Hotspots: A Global Risk Analysis*
- * Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community**
- * Greg Bankoff, *Mapping Vulnerability: Disasters, Development and People*
- * David R. Montgomery, *Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations*
- * World Health Organization, *The Management of Nutrition in Major Emergencies**

- * Richard A. Posner, Catastrophe: Risk and Response*
- * Michel Agier, On the Margins of the World
- * Karen Jacobsen, The Economic Life of Refugees
- * Mohamed Gad-el-Hak, Large-Scale Disasters: Prediction, Control, and Mitigation
- * United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Enhancing Urban Safety and Security
- * Vaclav Smil, Energy: A Beginner's Guide*
- * Nayef Al-Rodhan, Neo-Statecraft and Meta-Geopolitics
- * Nick Bostrom, Global Catastrophic Risks
- * Dmitry Shlapentokh, Societal Breakdown*
- * Michael Bollig, Risk Management in a Hazardous Environment
- * Carl Sagan, The Cold and the Dark: The World After Nuclear War*
- * Jerome H. Barkow, The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture
- * Azar Gat, War and Human Civilization*
- * Henrik Hogh-Olesen/Azar Gat, Human Morality and Sociality
- * Glenn M. Schwartz, After Collapse: The Regeneration of Complex Societies*
- * Herbert Gintis, The Bounds of Reason: Game Theory
- * Daron Acemoglu, Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy
- * Douglass North, Violence and Social Orders*
- * Mark Juergensmeyer, Terror in the Mind of God
- * Marc Gopin, Between Eden and Armageddon
- * Kenneth D. Rose, One Nation Underground
- * Colin S. Gray, Another Bloody Century
- * Robert D. Kaplan, The Coming Anarchy*
- * John Robb, Brave New War*
- * Fathali M. Moghaddam, The New Global Insecurity*
- * Kaldor, Old War, New War*
- * Tainter, Collapse of Complex Societies*
- * Jared Diamond, Collapse: How Human Societies Fail or Succeed
- * Walter Dodds, Humanity's Footprint: Momentum, Impact, and Our Global Environment
- * Goudsblom, The Course of Human History: Economic Growth, Social Process, and Civilization*
- * Bill McGuire, A Guide to the End of the World
- * Vaclav Smil, "Limits to Growth Revisited: A Review Essay"
- * Vaclav Smil, "Energy at the Crossroads"
- * Vaclav Smil, Global Catastrophes and Trends: The Next Fifty Years*

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Saturday, June 5, 2010

David Michael Green: What Lethal Arrogance Looks Like

What Lethal Arrogance Looks Like

by David Michael Green [article link](#)

June 4, 2010 | CommonDreams

I frequently find it useful to analogize countries to individuals. States will often have personalities and behavior sets quite similar to human beings.

That means they can sometimes be noble and do wonderful things. But it also means they can be petty, greedy, violent and worse.

If you've ever known what an arrogant bully looks like, you should find the personality of Israel today quite familiar. But if you've ever really understood what almost always lays behind a bully's almost always faux arrogance, you also might understand why Israel acts as it does.

In Israel's case there are some very good explanations (which is not necessarily the same thing as justifications) – both contemporary and especially historical – for attitudes that increasingly veer into paranoia, expressed in an international behavior set that too often takes the form of militant violence. These policies are, however, far more than most Israelis recognize ultimately to their own detriment, apart from the more obvious death and destruction brought down on others.

But those in the international community who are contemptuous or dismissive of Israel's very real security concerns are either analytically weak, normatively biased, or worse. That 'worse', unfortunately, is only somewhat less prevalent in the parlors of 'civilized' society today than it ever and always has been, and needs little provocation to rear its ugly little anti-Semitic head.

Still, regardless of what might happen tomorrow, we should be clear about what happened yesterday. If history has produced a people more afflicted than the Jews have been with racism, violence and even genocide, I don't know who that could be. Jews everywhere, including those in Israel, have come by their fears honestly. It is also undeniably the case that Israel remains to this day surrounded in a sea of mostly hostile neighbors, nearly all of whom were not so long ago committed to the country's annihilation. That is far less true now than it was in 1948 or 1973, but it is still true for Iran and Syria and Hamas and Hezbollah, among other actors in the region. And for Egypt and Jordan and the rest, the era of hostility is still not that far in the past, by historical standards.

And thus, though I am as little a fan of nationalism as anyone is ever likely to meet, I nevertheless believe it to be beyond doubt that there has to be a Jewish state in the world, and I don't even object to it being armed to the teeth with defensive and deterrent weaponry. It seems to me that there are few lessons of history which express themselves more clearly than this one, and believing otherwise risks the prospect of renewed violence and even genocide.

That said, had it been up to me in 1948, I might not have placed that state in Palestine, and I certainly wouldn't have countenanced the forcible ejection of Palestinian residents from their homes. But now it is 2010, not 1948 or 1880, and Israel is not going anywhere. Nor should it, for any such solution would be far worse than the problem it seeks to address. Countries like Egypt and Jordan have reluctantly made peace with that fact, and it would be helpful if others followed suit.

Regrettably, however, and notwithstanding a set of legitimate historical security concerns, nobody makes it harder to love Israel than Israel itself. This week's murderous incident in the Mediterranean is a shock to the senses, an offense to humanity, and an outrage piled on top of further outrages. It is difficult to imagine any circumstances that could justify the

behavior of Israel in this episode, in light of the alternative non-violent solutions so readily available even if the country wanted to prevent the flotilla from ever reaching Gaza. As one Israeli member of parliament herself said, “This had nothing to do with security. The armaments for Hamas were not coming from this flotilla.”

But, of course, this week’s events are only the top layer of a very poisonous cake. The existence of the flotilla points to a deeper Israeli outrage, which in turn is predicated on an even deeper one yet. There would have been no naval relief caravan to Gaza if there had been no need to bring relief to a blockaded Gaza in the first place. And there would be no Gaza as we know it today had there not been a continued illegal and oppressive occupation of Palestine for the last forty years.

This occupation has been incalculably onerous and humiliating for Palestinians. Moreover, despite the fact that Israel has withdrawn previously from the Sinai and Gaza, the character of the occupation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem telegraphs only one intention. You don’t build houses and whole cities in places where you have strategic security concerns. You build military outposts instead. The avowed agenda of the far right in Israel, which includes the government, is to fulfill some insane biblical promise (pardon the redundancy of terms there) that the Jews should come to possess lands in the region constituting a Greater Israel, stretching in the minds of the most deluded from the Nile to the Euphrates. Building towns and housing settlements for forty years in the West Bank and East Jerusalem not only smacks of colonialism, it is nearly impossible to construe it otherwise.

One of the great ironies of the Middle East debacle is the degree to which this behavior hurts Israel, not just those whom it represses and whose land it occupies. With the possible exception of the Golan Heights, there is almost zero strategic value in possessing these lands. Like America under the Bush administration, Israel has simply now become a country of many humane and decent people whose foreign policy has been hijacked by radical sociopaths belonging in insane asylums and jails, not world capitals. (Although that characterization of Israeli public opinion is less true today, as attitudes have hardened since the Second Intifada, and the disconnect between the public and its leadership is less profound – another of the region’s ironies.) But for a long time prior to that, there was a good deal of robust debate and sentiment for peace in Israel, certainly far more than there ever was in the United States.

What radical regressives (and in Israel we are talking about regressing 6000 years, far more than any Jerry Falwell ever dreamed) appreciate more than can be imagined is the power of fear, and how cycles of violence can be mobilized to make people do stupid things they wouldn’t otherwise. Dick Cheney, to choose only the most prominent example, wouldn’t even exist outside this simple premise. And, while there is plenty of blame to go around for the century of violence in the region, Israel has now been led by radical criminals to the place where it is the chief purveyor of that violence, which has become both the biggest stain on its international reputation and, again ironically, its own biggest security threat through the radicalization of adversaries and the alienation of allies.

The recent invasion of Lebanon (not to mention the one before that), the invasion of Gaza and the attack this week on the relief flotilla all represent almost wholly unjustified acts of aggression on Israel’s part. While any state can always muster up some pretext for war (“Saddam has WMD!”), and Israel has done so in each of these cases, what has become clear is that the country has left the earlier epoch of its history in which it fought mostly defensive wars of existential urgency (1948, 1967, 1973), and has transitioned to an era in which it is now fighting rudely aggressive wars, using outrageous weapons and tactics, and offering increasingly weak justifications for those wars (which justifications are anyway are rooted in the Palestinian people’s reaction to the ongoing provocation of an illegal and oppressive occupation).

In addition to the carnage suffered by others, in this way Israel has become its own worst enemy. I mean that quite literally, and not just in the sense of the moral outrage of the international community. The sad truth is that nothing threatens Israeli security more today than the stupidity, greed, aggression, inhumanity, and lately sheer arrogance of its foreign policy.

People are beginning to notice in places where they had not before. That big ol’ country to the north is less a turkey than a canary in a coal mine right now. Israel has long had good relations with Turkey, certainly its best with any Islamic country. But the Israelis seem almost willfully intent on alienating their friends in Anatolia, and they are succeeding admirably, especially this week. Meanwhile, the British prime minister sharply criticized the attack, and the US did that rarest of things, letting a (toned way down, to be sure) resolution emerge from the United Nations Security Council.

Likewise even in America. I never go in for the right-wing supposed honor code violations that call for heated response to the impudence of this Cuban dictator or that French president who has the stones to diss American policy, especially when their greatest sin is telling the truth. But I confess that it pissed me off considerably when the Israeli government announced new housing construction for East Jerusalem at just the moment when the American vice president was visiting. America (foolishly, to some extent) gives Israel a considerable amount of (my tax) dollars every year, and jeopardizes a good deal of its own security by the unpopular choice of backing Israel in the region. Would it be too much to ask that Israel, in return, not publically stick its finger right in our eye? That announcement of new housing construction, expressly contrary to the articulated position of the US government, wasn't just a bad policy choice. That was a willful expression of supreme arrogance.

The list of damages done goes on. Israel seems increasingly intent on spending all its remaining virtues to cover the initial bad check of its turn toward colonialism. It is eating itself from within, in order to avoid confronting its demons. The war crimes documented in the Goldstone Report on the Gaza invasion give one example, the reaction to which among the South African Jewish community (which must be much like the American one) was initially to try banning Mr. Goldstone, an internationally highly regarded jurist, from attending his own grandson's bar mitzvah. Meanwhile, no less than a former deputy speaker of the Knesset has expressed serious concerns about the far-right's successful attempts at domestic censorship of any critical discourse in Israeli society.

Perhaps the most telling episode, however, has been Israeli reaction to the Saudi peace plan of 2002, which was reintroduced in 2007 and endorsed unanimously by the twenty-two members of the Arab League. The proffered bargain gave Israel everything it originally wanted – peace, recognition by its neighbors, normalized relations – and even more, since it contemplated a return to wider 1967 borders, not those lesser ones detailed by the 1947 UN resolution which partitioned Palestine and gave birth to the Israeli state. In exchange for this, Israel had only to recognize a Palestinian state and agree to just treatment of Palestinian refugees. It is a measure of the pathology that has overtaken contemporary Israel today that the government has never even responded to this grand deal – which represents a monumental leap for the Arab community – although the current prime minister rejected it outright when he was the opposition leader in 2007.

In short, the situation is grim, as this week's events underscore. The cycle of tit-for-tat response has metastasized into a pathology of violence and recalcitrance in Israel's government, and among some parts of the Arab and Muslim world. Shooting civilians on a ship in the middle of a relief mission is merely the logical extension of such a process.

And yet, these events could perhaps also produce some salutary effects in the end. Barack Obama clearly has little use for Israel's antics, but is also clearly the most gutless creature on the planet with the possible exception of a few especially reticent amoeba hiding under a rock somewhere in New Zealand. However, Israel's arrogance and provocations may create the space for even the feckless Obama to apply some real pressure. That doesn't seem likely, given the power of the Israel Lobby in Washington, and given Obama's overall uselessness as president, but it also seems more probable today than ever in my lifetime. Israel has simply gone crazy, and by doing so it is making it increasingly difficult for others to stand by it.

My wider hope is that the Palestinians have stumbled into a more effective way to bring pressure toward a passably equitable solution to the conflict. I deplore violence, but I understand why Palestinians have employed it, including the use of terrorism (notwithstanding that the term has been distorted and politicized to the point of near meaninglessness). It was successful in putting their cause on the map, just as Zionist violence (and "terrorism" – by the way – conducted by people who would later become Israeli prime ministers) gave birth to Israel, and just as colonists' violence and "terrorism" (as King George described it) gave birth to the United States. But that said, and even apart from the moral question, strategically, the era in which Palestinian violence effectively serves to advance its agenda has ended.

What the confrontation at sea this week dramatically points out is an idea I have argued for a long time. Namely, that the Palestinians, who already have the vast majority of world opinion on their side, should adopt Gandhian methods of nonviolent confrontation in order to bring Israel to its senses and to the bargaining table. What if a million Palestinians went on hunger strike tomorrow? How long could Israel and its American benefactors withstand the glaring spotlight such an action would shine on the Palestinian cause, especially as martyrs began dying? Perhaps even something quite that lethal would not be necessary. Perhaps mass sit-down strikes might do the trick, or civil disobedience in public venues. The point

is that such tactics would work, whereas violence against Israel not only isn't working, but only strengthens the bloody hand of the monstrous hawks there.

Palestinians must also come to terms with the fact that their full aspirations will never be realized. This must be psychologically painful in the extreme. It is as if someone knocked on the front door of your house, walked in and took over the first floor and parts of the second, cheerfully left you a few remaining rooms to occupy, and then wondered why you weren't satisfied. I think Palestinians have long been debilitated by the Hobson's choice of, on the one hand, accepting, and thereby legitimating, the status quo, versus continuing to hold out for more, up to and including the dream of driving the invading Jews into the sea and restoring the homeland to their exclusive control. In addition to the horrors of what they call "the catastrophe" itself, I don't envy anyone the additional moral dilemma of choosing whether and when to admit defeat as opposed to continuing their struggle for what they believe is justly theirs. That's a very hard choice to make, and is always further haunted by those who have already sacrificed for the struggle before.

But history is history. There is no remotely serious prospect of undoing the Zionist project, with all its ramifications for the Palestinians, just as there is no undoing the Holocaust or the pogroms, or the much earlier forced Jewish diaspora from the same lands the Palestinians now mourn losing. I hope the Palestinians can find a way toward negotiating a peace with Israel that is by definition far less than everything they want. Fatah, post-Arafat, seems to be there. Hamas would appear not to be, but not necessarily implacably so. (The regional and ideological differences between the two are, by the way, no small thing. Indeed, I have long believed that the first casualty of Palestinian statehood will be the Palestinian state itself. Just as East and West Pakistan, separated by India, quickly transitioned from one country into two, so, I suspect, would Palestine become Gaza and the West Bank.)

The potential for peace finally coming to the region is not insubstantial at this moment. Some of the underlying conditions are even rather favorable. Nor should we be blinded by the magnitude of the project into believing that it is impossible. No one would have ever believed in 1970 that Israel would soon have peaceful and substantially normal relations with Egypt and Jordan. No one would have ever believed in 1940 that France and Germany would become, not only close friends and allies, but even partners in driving an integration project in which both have voluntarily ceded much of their sovereignty to a supranational organization.

But getting there will require that both sides, and the United States as well, adopt new approaches to replace the existing ones which are clearly dysfunctional. Israel and the United States have the upper hand in terms of sheer physical force, and are favored by existing conditions on the ground. They are therefore least likely to move. The Palestinians, who have everything to gain from change, must drive the process forward if they want it to happen.

My advice to the Palestinians would be two-fold. First, as described above, start employing civil disobedience and other forms of mass-based passive resistance tactics in place of rockets and bombs. The power of those images – especially today, in our YouTube world – are enormous, and enormously effective at gaining the sympathy of the world. My second suggestion may sound like a joke, but it is not at all. The Palestinians should follow other countries, corporations and the like, including most who need it far less than they do, and spend a boatload of money to hire the best public relations firm they can find in America, in order to give their image and their cause here a massive make-over. America is crucial to the Mid-East conflict, but American politicians are unable to do anything but reflexively support Israel, even when it is snotty and abusive to the US itself. That's because the Palestinians have no image here other than as terrorists, and because their plight is all but unheard of. This perhaps can be rectified, though it won't happen quickly or easily. But a change in American public opinion would free American foreign policy to change, which might likely in turn ultimately undermine Israeli arrogance and recalcitrance.

Israel, like America under Bush, has gone mad. Some of the reasons for this happening are morally valid and some are not. What matters, though, is how to bring the country back to its senses, especially now that the Palestinian leadership (at least in the West Bank) has changed sufficiently to do a deal, something Yasser Arafat seemed constitutionally unable to quite ever embrace, plagued as he probably was, I'd imagine, by the awful Hobson's choice described above.

But I don't think Israel is likely to change on its own. It has little incentive to, as things stand today. That change will require the Palestinians, perhaps via the United States, to force it upon Israel, but not by means of force.

If there is any silver lining to the events of this week, it is that they have illuminated the path by which that might be done. And, better still, it is a nonviolent path.

David Michael Green is a professor of political science at Hofstra University in New York. He is delighted to receive readers' reactions to his articles (mailto:dmg@regressiveantidote.net), but regrets that time constraints do not always allow him to respond. More of his work can be found at his website, www.regressiveantidote.net.

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‘Mad Dog’ Diplomacy

A cornered Israel is baring its teeth

By Jonathan Cook in Nazareth [article link](#)

June 04, 2010 | Information Clearing House

Information Clearing House [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:24 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, June 4, 2010

[Mike Samu: The Terror Of The Situation: Watching America Unfold](#)

The Terror Of The Situation: Watching America Unfold

by Mike Samu [article link](#)

June 4, 2010 | OpEdNews

Borrowing a term from a 20th century mystic, (G.I. Gurdjieff), we find ourselves caught in a world of illusion. We believe what we are told, as it is easier than trying to figure out answers to the tough questions confronting our peace of mind and tranquility. We go about our daily activities not even realizing that we are sleepwalking, we are not consciously aware that we are not consciously aware.

Reflection & delusions fill the day. When we get dressed in the morning we look into a mirror to be certain that our hair looks good, that our clothes are on straight and then double check to make sure our fly is not open. Well maybe that's just me. Reflections in a mirror will only tell us part of the truth. We cannot see our back side, our right-side is on the left-side, yet we never question why it is that we are not up-side-down hmmm.

The Map Is Not The Territory; The Menu Is Not Food, or so goes the basic tenant of Neural Linguistic Programing (NLP) followers. President McKinley could not find the Philippines on a world map, yet his navy had defeated the Spanish rule of the islands and they were suddenly American protectorates. I get no satisfaction from eating a menu at Denny's and some of pictures are hard to digest. The reflection I see in the mirror is not me, it's an illusion. Reflections are not reality.

We see what we want to see and we hear what we wish to hear. How many times have you missed a turn while driving along mindlessly. We watch television shows which reflect our interests. We watch only the news channels that feed our deep-seated beliefs and political persuasion and we listen to talk radio from broadcasters who think like us. All the others are propaganda, liars, hypocrites & lunatics, trying to undermine the American way of life.

American Exceptionalism; If only we were as great as we believe ourselves to be, or even as great as our dog believes we are. American leaders have always claimed that the people of this country are the brightest, most inventive, hardest working of any society in the world. OK, we helped out in winning a couple of World Wars through concerted efforts, but then we went on to loose a few after that. Through the lens of being exceptional, however, we really didn't loose any war; Vietnam & Korea were never declared wars by Congress, just police actions so you really can't count them. Iraq & Afghanistan were never declared either, so we can't loose.

Manifest Destiny was a concept that filled the hearts and minds of many 19th century. We were on a mission from God to kill off those native savages and steal land from the Mexicans. Onward to Cuba, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Hawaii, and the Philippines, it was a Divine mission the White House would tell the public.

The Bush/Cheney administration considered themselves above international laws, and they surrounded themselves with people who supported their delusions. Authoritarians are always right; no discussion. While the White House Lawyer, Gonzales (?), told Bush that he did not need to follow the Geneva Convention (torture) rules because Afghanistan was a "failed state." But nobody bothered to tell Bush or Cheney that we were not at war with Afghanistan, we were at war with a small group of freedom-fighters. With the Military Commissions Act (2006), they wrote legislation which the rubber-stamping Republican Congress passed into law and granted them immunity from prosecution of any war crimes. Chutzpah !!

We are watching the unfolding of American Democracy in real time. The First Amendment to the Constitution insures that Congress cannot make any law that limits free speech. "Speech" was not well defined in the Constitution but most every dictionary defines it as a vocalization, produced by people. But the Supreme Court has expanded the definition so the act of speaking can lawfully be attributed not only to people, those with voices, but to include those who let their money do the talking. Is this a great country or what ? The Supreme Court validated this with their Corporate Personhood decisions to support corporatocracy. But nowhere in the Constitution does free speech have an obligation to be truthful. Reagan once said "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." It's a relative position, which politicians seem to take as license to lie.

The Second Amendment allows people to own and use guns. In 2008, there were 9,369 homicides by gunfire in the US, while in the UK, where guns are prohibited, the number was 14. Hey, if some one does not agree with your thinking, we can just shoot "em.

The Sixth Amendment assures the accused to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury. The Seventh Amendment assures that all suits where the value of the controversy exceed \$20 must be tried by a jury. Well that is sure inconvenient. So today we depend on plea bargains to lesser-charges to keep the court rooms free of unnecessary jurisprudence. The US ranks #1 in the world with the most persons incarcerated (2,019,234;15%) while China, with over a million more people only had 1,549,000 prisoners behind bars in 2008 (8.6%). And the USA ranks #24 among all nations in crime rate. We either have some pretty-good police & judges or we have a lot of lousy lawyers; it's relative.

The Eight Amendment says that "no cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." Torture is not a relative term, it's just plain wrong, so don't try to define it to fit your needs, it's illegal, it's immoral and not malleable; sorry, Dick.

The Fourteenth Amendment, originally written to remove slavery from the American culture has been twisted to induce slavery by corporations. OK, Supreme Court justices, have you even bothered to read the Fourteenth Amendment ? Corporations are not people, never were and should never be. It states in Section 1: *"All persons born or naturalized in the United States are subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the State wherein they reside. No State shall enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor deny to any person within it's jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."* Section 2 regards the age of representatives; Section 3 talks about being an office holder who has engaged in an insurrection against the country; Section 4 is about debt; Section 5 allows Congress to enforce by appropriate legislation, the provisions of the amendment. I have not found any act of Congress which has established corporations (or multi-nationals) as persons or citizens.

Educational misfortunes run the gamut from under-funding, under-staffing, and rewriting history, as in *The Texas Schoolbook Massacre*. Most schools no longer teach Civics, so people never learn how our government is supposed to operate. The purpose of education has become keeping inquiring minds occupied with rote, quieting dissensions so that they never learn critical thinking skills. It's a lot like religion, just believe, don't question. If they never know, they will never question authority. Social Studies became depositories of mis-information; many high-school graduates believe like Sarah Palin that Africa is a country and they are hard-pressed to identify Viet Nam or Laos on a map. Give them a globe and they'll walk away in disgust.

The value of a college degree has been lost. Many people with bachelors and graduate degrees are waiting tables, short order cooks or in the military because they could not find appropriate jobs. You may soon need a PhD to work at the grocery checkout register. Many of today's college graduates enter the jobless market thousands of dollars in debt.

The Bill Of Rights, Amendments 1-10 of the Constitution, was a novel idea granting persons, not corporations, certain rights and privileges. But a War-Time-President, which Bush-43 wanted to be, has the rights to limit personal freedoms in the interest of National Security. But here is the problem Bush-43 was appointed by the Supreme Court, not by the public in a free-election, but by suspicious election fraud. So was he a duly elected President, according to the Constitution, or a Corporate Shill, appointed by a nine member panel of elites?

The Patriot Act I & II took certain rights and privileges away from the American people under the pretense that we were at war. But Congress is the only authority in this country to declare war; they never did. War is between two international states, not between one state and a bunch of distributed tribes. We are at war [sic] with an ideology. OK, Iraq was a war, preemptive and illegal, but Congress funded it just the same. Now it is an "occupation" since Bush-43 declared victory on an aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln off the coast of California on May 1, 2003, we are no longer at war [sic]. Occupational Presidents have undefined powers in limiting citizens rights. Afghanistan remains a Police Action and not a war. So why are we still denying rights?

On September 29, 2006, the US Senate agreed to the Military Commissions Act which gives US President George Bush unprecedented power to detain and try people as part of his "War on Terror." Broadly, the Act does 3 things:

1. Strips the right of detainees to habeas corpus.
2. Gives the US President the power to detain indefinitely anyone--US or foreign nationals, from within the US, and from abroad if it (Bush-42) deems to have provided material support to anti-US hostilities (excluding Saudi Arabia), and even use secret and coerced evidence (i.e. through use of torture, Constitutionally illegal) to try detainees who will be held in secret US military prisons.
3. Gives US officials immunity from prosecution for torturing detainees that were captured before the end of 2005 by US military and CIA.

The bill was passed by the Senate sixty five votes in favor, thirty four against. Twelve Democrats joined the Republican majority according to [Global Issues](#). You have to pay to play....

With the blind-foresight of improving the economy, Clinton signed away our country's sovereignty when we joined the WTO. The World Trade Organization was supposed to eliminate trade barriers between nations, and it came at a stiff price. The World Trade Organization is the most powerful legislative and judicial body in the world. By promoting the "free trade" agenda of multinational corporations above the interests of local communities, working families, and the environment, the WTO has systematically undermined democracy around the world. According to the WTO, our democratically elected public officials no longer have the rights to protect the environment and public health. Well that explains a toothless health-care reform.

By signing onto the WTO strategy, the US has relinquished it's authority to regulate industries. This includes the Financial. WTO has demanded that financial regulations be reduced and outlaws such things as too-big-to fail. Glass-Steagall, the separation of investment banks from commercial and insurance companies had to go. This may be the reason why the Financial Reform bill was gutted from providing real reforms.

The GATS (General Agreement on Trades in Services) section covers every service imaginable. This includes municipal services, public services in sectors that affect the environment, drinking water, health care, education, transportation services, and even postal delivery. The objective is to privatize everything so that services can be provided more cheaply by those in foreign countries, and by private corporations here. But the reality is that the government can usually do a far better job at a lower cost than private corporations with stockholders demanding a profit.

It's constraints apply to virtually all government measures affecting trade-in-services, from labor laws to consumer protection; including regulations, guidelines, subsidies and grants, licensing standards and qualifications, limitations on access to markets, economic needs tests and local content provisions.

Because of the WTO, NAFTA and other trade agreements we have outsourced millions of jobs to developing countries, dropped tariffs, and are forced to accept companies like British Petroleum to ravage our environment. Corporatocracy, Oligarchy, Plutocracy & Kleptocracy are legitimate [sic] and this is bringing about the end, not only to national sovereignty, but to democracy & mankind as well.

Watching the Deepwater Horizons Oil Catastrophe unfold before my eyes on television I am reminded of how it is a living documentary on the demise of America. Take the deregulation of laws regarding oil drilling (Cheney), the environmental consequences of lax safety regulations and inspections, as in the Massey Mine Disaster, the destruction of labor-unions and the Health Care debacle and we see a lame-duck government.

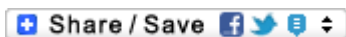
I watched as operation Top-Hat tried to cover a man-made disaster. Cover it up, maybe no one will notice; reminds me of a long history of CIA interventions in foreign lands with complete deniability. Operation Junk-Shot, forcing garbage down the throat, to shut off objectionable discontent; sounds a lot like propaganda being forced down the throat of the American people in newspapers, radio and television journalism. Top-Kill was another attempt to cement over the free-speech mother nature was exuding. And the Diamond-Saw suggests the surgical removal of American's Bill of Rights.

I finally understand what Donald Rumsfeld meant when he said: "There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know". (~regarding WMDs in Iraq)

And the wisdom of Alan Greenspan: "I guess I should warn you, if I turn out to be particularly clear, you've probably misunderstood what I've said." and the infamous quote which explains everything: "I know you believe you understood what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

Gurdjieff is laughing in his grave.

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[John Kozy: The Psychopathic Criminal Enterprise Called America](#)

The Psychopathic Criminal Enterprise Called America

The Government uses the Law to Harm People or Shield the Establishment

by Prof. John Kozy [article link](#)

June 4, 2010 | Global Research

Most Americans know that politicians make promises they never fulfill; few know that politicians make promises they lack the means to fulfill, as President Obama's political posturing on the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico makes perfectly clear.

Obama has made the following statements:

He told his "independent commission" investigating the Gulf oil spill to "thoroughly examine the disaster and its causes to ensure that the nation never faces such a catastrophe again." Aside from the fact that presidential commissions have a history of providing dubious reports and ineffective recommendations, does anyone really believe that a way can be found to prevent industrial accidents from happening ever again? Even if the commissions findings and recommendations succeed

in reducing the likelihood of such accidents, doesn't this disaster prove that it only takes one? And unlikely events happen every day.

The president has said, "if laws are insufficient, they'll be changed." But no president has this ability, only Congress has, and the president must surely know how difficult getting the Congress to effectively change anything is. He also said that "if government oversight wasn't tough enough, that will change, too." Will it? Even if he replaces every person in an oversight position, he can't guarantee it. The people who receive regulatory positions always have ties to the industries they oversee and can look forward to lucrative jobs in those industries when they leave governmental service. As long as corporate money is allowed to influence governmental action, neither the Congress nor regulators can be expected to change the laws or regulatory practices in ways that make them effective, and there is nothing any president can do about it. Even the Congress' attempt to raise the corporate liability limit for oil spills from \$75 million to \$10 billion has already hit a snag.

The President has said that "if laws were broken, those responsible will be brought to justice" and that BP would be held accountable for the "horrific disaster." He said BP will be paying the bill, and BP has said it takes responsibility for the clean-up and will pay compensation for "legitimate and objectively verifiable" claims for property damage, personal injury, and commercial losses. But "justice" is rendered in American courts, not by the executive branch. Any attempts to hold BP responsible will be adjudicated in the courts at the same snail's pace that the responsibility for the Exxon-Mobile Alaska oil spill was adjudicated and likely will have the same results.

The Exxon Valdez oil spill occurred in Prince William Sound on March 24, 1989. In *Baker v. Exxon*, an Anchorage jury awarded \$287 million for actual damages and \$5 billion for punitive damages, but after nineteen years of appellate jurisprudence, the Supreme Court on June 25, 2008 issued a ruling reducing the punitive damages to \$507.5 million, roughly a tenth of the original jury's award. Furthermore, even that amount was reduced further by nineteen years of inflation. By that time, many of the people who would have been compensated by these funds had died.

The establishment calls this justice. Do you? Do those of you who reside in the coastal states that will ultimately be affected by the Deepwater Horizon disaster really believe that the President can make good on this promise of holding BP responsible? By the time all the lawsuits filed in response to this disaster wend their ways through the legal system, Mr. Obama will be grayed, wizened, and ensconced in a plush chair in an Obama Presidential Library, completely out of the picture and devoid of all responsibility.

Politicians who engage in this duplicitous posturing know that they can't fulfill their promises. They know they are lying; yet they do it pathologically. Aesop writes, "A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth." Perhaps that's why politicians never do.

Government in America consists of law. Legislators write it, executives apply it, and courts adjudicate it. But the law is a lie. We are told to respect the law and that it protects us. But it doesn't. Think about it people! The law and law enforcement only come into play *secundum vitium* (after the crime). The police don't show up before you're assaulted, robbed, or murdered; they come after. So how does that protect you? Yes, if a relationship of trust is violated, you can sue if you can afford it, and even that's not a sure thing. (Remember the victims of the Exxon-Valdez disaster!) Even if the person who violated the relationship gets sanctioned, will you be "made whole"? Most likely not! Relying on the law is a fool's errand. It's enacted, enforced, and adjudicated by liars.

The law is a great crime, far greater than the activities it outlaws, and there's no way you can protect yourself from it. The establishment protects itself. The law does not protect people. It is merely an instrument of retribution. It can only be used, often ineffectively, to get back at the malefactor. It never un-dos the crime. Executing the murderer doesn't bring back the dead. Putting Ponzi schemers in jail doesn't get your money back. And holding BP responsible won't restore the Louisiana marshes, won't bring back the dead marine and other wildlife, and won't compensate the victims for their losses. Carefully watch what happens over the next twenty years as the government uses the law to shield BP, Transocean, and Halliburton while the claims of those affected by the spill disappear into the quicksand of the American legal system.

[Jim Kouri](#), citing FBI studies, writes that "some of the character traits exhibited by serial killers or criminals may be observed in many within the political arena.;" they share the traits of psychopaths who are not sensitive to altruistic appeals, such as sympathy for their victims or remorse or guilt over their crimes. They possess the personality traits of lying, narcissism, selfishness, and vanity. These are the people to whom we have entrusted our fate. Is it any wonder that America is failing at home and world-wide?

Some may say that this is an extreme, audacious claim. I, too, was surprised when I read Kouri's piece. But anecdotal evidence to support it is easily cited. John McCain said "bomb, bomb, bomb" during the last presidential campaign in response to a question about Iran. No one in government has expressed the slightest qualms about the killing of tens of thousands of people in both Iraq and Afghanistan who had absolutely nothing to do with what happened on nine/eleven or the deliberate targeting of women and children by unmanned drones in Pakistan. What if anything distinguishes serial killers from these governmental officials? Only that they don't do the killing themselves but have others do it for them. But that's exactly what most of the godfathers of the cosa nostra did.

So, there are questions that need to be posed: Has the government of the United States of America become a criminal enterprise? Is the nation ruled by psychopaths? Well, how can the impoverishment of the people, the promotion of the military-industrial complex and endless wars and their genocidal killing, the degradation of the environment, the neglect of the collapsing infrastructure, and the support of corrupt and authoritarian governments (often called democracies) abroad be explained? Worse, why are corporations allowed to profiteer during wars while the people are called upon to sacrifice? Why hasn't the government ever tried to prohibit such profiteering? It's not that it can't be done.

In the vernacular, harming people is considered a crime. It is just as much a crime when done by governments, legal systems, or corporations. The government uses the law to harm people or shield the establishment from the consequences of harming people all the time. Watch as no one from the Massey Energy Co. is ever prosecuted for the disaster at the Upper Big Branch coal mine. When corporations are accused of wrongdoing, they often reply that what they did was legal, but legal is not a synonym for right. When criminals gain control, they legalize criminality.

Unless the government of the United States changes its behavior, this nation is doomed. No one in government seems to realize that dissimulation breeds distrust, distrust breeds suspicion, and suspicion eventually arouses censure. Isn't that failure of recognition by the establishment a sign of criminal psychopathology?

John Kozy is a retired professor of philosophy and logic who blogs on social, political, and economic issues. After serving in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, he spent 20 years as a university professor and another 20 years working as a writer. He has published a textbook in formal logic commercially, in academic journals and a small number of commercial magazines, and has written a number of guest editorials for newspapers. His on-line pieces can be found on <http://www.jkozy.com/> and he can be emailed from that site's homepage.

John Kozy is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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Gordon Clark: Gulf Madness

Gulf Madness

by Gordon Clark [article link](#)

June 3, 2010 | CommonDreams

It was a few weeks after the oil well started spewing millions of gallons of crude into the Gulf of Mexico that I heard a radio reporter ask the increasingly commonplace question -- "Where's the outrage?"

Here's a better question: where isn't the outrage?

I'm outraged that 11 men died because a criminally negligent oil company (BP has a long track record) was cutting corners to save money. I'm outraged that this same oil company clearly had no plan, no idea what to do in the event of such a catastrophic accident. I'm outraged that their methods of "cleaning up" the oil haven't changed since the Exxon Valdez spill 20 years ago, and that most of them are either ineffective (booms that only work when the sea is calm), or worse than the oil itself (dumping highly toxic "dispersant" into the ocean). I'm outraged that they have clearly been lying about how much oil is pouring into the Gulf, and have been trying to keep reporters from seeing the worst damage.

I'm beyond outraged that our federal government has left this horrible, criminally negligent oil company in charge of the operation. What happened in the Gulf (and will continue to wreak havoc for years to come) is the equivalent of a nuclear weapon explosion. What the hell has to happen before the President organizes a truly national response? Why hasn't he mobilized every damn engineer in the country to try to stop the gusher? Why hasn't he brought any of our trillion dollars worth of military hardware and personnel, sitting on the other side of the planet in a different Gulf, back to help deal with this very clear and present threat to our nation?

I'm seething with rage that our government has allowed, if not helped, BP to hide the extent of the disaster so far. And that government regulators were, once again, in bed with the industry they are supposed to oversee. (Are they ever not?) And that we have to settle for kabuki theater Congressional hearings where everyone blames everybody else, and you just know that no BP executive will go to jail for this horrendous crime.

I'm so outraged that when I think about it too long I start to shake. And for the most part I can't think about it -- it's just too much. Instead I am continually, deeply depressed, because we are watching the greatest environmental catastrophe in history unfold before our eyes, and I have no idea what to do about it. I suspect a lot of other people feel the same way.

And then I am stricken anew when I see a picture or think about the countless birds and turtles and fish and dolphins being choked to death on oil and wiped out, some species perhaps permanently since we are destroying their breeding grounds and nurseries. Have we become so divorced from nature that this type of staggering devastation no longer registers with us?

About a year ago I was discussing climate change with my god kids, and I joked that they needed to grow up fast and solve these problems. "We hear that a lot," my goddaughter responded.

My God, is that what we humans have become? The species that destroys the planet and then just turns to our kids and says, "Oops, sorry?" What has to happen before we make radical changes in the way we live on this planet? What the hell is wrong with us?

Gordon Clark is the former national Executive Director of Peace Action, and the Project Director of [Montgomery Victory Gardens](#).

Bitten by History:

From the Gulf to Gaza and Afghanistan, the Familiar Way Proves the Wrong Way

by Tom Engelhardt [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 4, 2010 TomDispatch | CommonDreams

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Yes, Obama Is 'Engaged' – in a Colossal Crime

by BAR executive editor Glen Ford [article link](#)

Corporate media pretend to measure degrees of presidential “engagement” with the Gulf crisis – an “oceanic version of Chernobyl.” Such superficial reporting is totally disengaged from the truth that screams from the depths of the sea: “Huge corporations are empowered to seek profits with absolutely no regard for the consequences to Earth or Man.”

June 02, 2010 | BAR

Black Agenda Report [home page](#)

A Great Global Shift of Power?

"The Center Cannot Hold: Rekindling the Radical Imagination"

By Noam Chomsky [transcript link](#)

May 31, 2010 | Amy Goodman

Democracy Now! [home page](#)

Desperate Financial Situation, Biggest Debt Bubble in World History:

Fifty Statistics About The U.S. Economy

by The American Dream [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 4, 2010 | The American Dream | Global Research

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Common Security Clubs Offer the Jobless a Lifeline

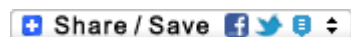
The jobless in the United States lose far more than their paychecks; they also lose precious social support.

By Arlie Hochschild [article link](#) [article link](#)

May 25, 2010 | Los Angeles Times | AlterNet

LA Times [home page](#)

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [7:13 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, June 3, 2010

[Justine Sharrock: Right-Wing Extremists Organize and Promote Violence on Facebook](#)

Right-Wing Extremists Organize and Promote Violence on Facebook

Should the Feds Bust Them Or Leave Them Alone?

By Justine Sharrock [article link](#)

June 3, 2010 | AlterNet

With all the concern about the lack of privacy on Facebook, one would think that the online social networking site would be the last place that paranoid, right-wing extremist groups would organize. But a wide range of groups, from patriot organizations to militias and even white supremacists, are using social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube to organize and even espouse illegal activities.

Take the American Resistance Movement, a network of militia groups that vows to take up arms against what it claims is an increasingly tyrannical government. Its [Facebook pages](#) and those of its members are filled with conspiratorial news about the New World Order and impending martial law, information about AK-47s, announcements for meetings, links to YouTube recruitment videos, and information about boycotts and elections.

Clicking through ARM's profiles and walls offers an insider's view of what these groups are all about. ARM member and Three Percenter [Bradley Clifford](#), who ran the ARM online forum, suggested that I check out Facebook, MySpace and YouTube rather than ARM's own Web site to "get a better picture" of the group. In fact, he eventually ended up taking down its Web site all together.

The photo pages are filled with shots of masked men holding machine guns, some with the U.S. flag tied around their lower faces. There are photos of AR-15s and AK-47s, Palin signs, eagles and hot chicks with guns. There are American flags, Don't Tread on Me flags and Confederate flags. Images of the Founding Fathers sit next to those of Obama depicted as a socialist in front of the Russian flag. Favored Thomas Jefferson quotes like "The Tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants" and "When the government fears the people, there is liberty. When the people fear the government, there is tyranny" litter posts and individual About Me sections.

Looking through pages for ARM as well as linked groups like [Sons of Liberty](#), (a "peaceful" group whose mission states, "As John Locke said, it is not only the right, but the duty of the people to overthrow an oppressive government. In the future, if need be, the new 'sons of liberty' shall and will take back control of this nation.") [Three Per Centers](#), Right to Revolt and "White Fang Revolution," linked YouTube videos range from footage of militia trainings, infomercials about the New World Order and hip hop videos promoting an armed revolution. There are tips on how to stockpile ammo and survival gear, and calls to impeach Obama and resist the New World Order.

It seems odd to see all this on Facebook, but in some ways it makes perfect sense. Any grassroots political movement from the Tea Parties to MoveOn to Obama's election volunteers has to maximize social-networking sites to be successful. Likewise, right-wing extremist groups realize that the reach and efficiency these sites offer can't be duplicated. They can reach members who are isolated in rural areas (or liberal pockets like San Francisco), link to like-minded organizations and quickly disseminate information far and wide.

It's particularly essential for groups like ARM, which use the leaderless resistance model, in which organizations operate as a network of small dispersed independent yet interlinked groups and individuals, without one easily identifiable leader who can be easily targeted. It eliminates the weak link represented by a central leadership that has historically been targeted by the government and has proved vulnerable to internal disputes and struggles within movements. It allows individuals to take initiatives on a local level while still working together and sharing strategies and ideas. Popularized in 1962 by former Klansman turned Aryan Nationalist [Louis Beam](#), it's a structure that is used by a variety of groups, from the Earth Liberation Front to the Tea Party movement.

Social networking sites mimic the structure of these groups, making them the ideal way to communicate. The page itself becomes a sort of central command: it's a meeting place, operating manual, source of information and inspiration, outreach tool and in essence becomes a sort of cyber leader in itself. The Xerox machine made pamphleting easier and telephones aided outreach, but social networking has influenced the very essence of organizations.

Social networking sites also encourage a greater level of cross-pollination and cooperation between different factions. "If you physically put these different factions in a room together, they would fight. Online they can sound off and vent instead of exchanging blows, and agree to put aside their difference. At public rallies you will find the whole spectrum invited to join together and show a strong presence in the real world. There is more willingness to work together," explains Brian Marcus from the Anti-Defamation League.

Social networking sites work best for leaderless resistance models as opposed to hierarchies. The Oath Keepers, for example, which is rigidly led by its founder Stewart Rhodes, has disabled most of its Facebook page, since Rhodes couldn't stop people from posting things like calls for armed resistance that contradicted his message and mission. Online, the group took on a life of its own and became greater than the founder and the official organization itself.

Many of the posts are benign---sharing news articles or announcements for meetings---but some cross the line into potentially illegal or dangerous territory. One member and frequent Facebook poster, active duty soldier [Robert Hase](#), wrote on ARM's wall that ARM "will resist and destroy Socialism, Fascism, Communism and terrorism. Foreign or domestic. I will never stop fighting the traitors. [Wan't \[sic\] to help me?](#)"

Another member, Johnny Pernisco, [posted](#), "...I will start war against to [sic] new world order till it over and our country will take america back to us as we the people." The person behind Right to Revolt posted "The Founders knew we would one day lose our Republic. They also knew we would shed our blood & spill the blood of tyrants to restore it!" and earlier, "I'm beginning to feel an urge, more descriptively....a violent impulse! Totally unrelated I'm sure, but my trigger finger has been having muscle spasms as well! MUCH MUCH self control is being exhausted to keep myself within the confines of the law. What a pity that those we sent to DC to uphold the law, have so blatantly and frequently defecated on it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Jered Bonneau, who used Facebook to draw people to his militia in Washington State, posted a detailed plan for a "mass stand-off" blockading state Capitols meant to incite police and federal officers to "fire the first shot...Letting other militias Amp up their guards. Sending an Alarm and muster throughout the nation."

Bonneau has a network of allies in groups like the Three Percenters, Oath Keepers, Sons of Liberty across the country that he communicates with almost exclusively through Facebook. During the health care reform debates there were numerous tweets calling for Obama's assassination. Solomon "Solly" Forell wrote, "'We'll surely get over a bullet 2 [Barack Obama's](#) head!" Jay Martin, aka Thheee_Jay posted a series of tweets including, "You should be assassinated @BarackObama" and "If I lived in DC I'd shoot him myself. Point Blank. Dead Fucking Serious." Most infamously, Daniel Knight Hayden tweeted threats "start the killing now" signaling his intent to wreak havoc at a Tax Day protest (some of which is still up on [Twitter](#). Under the name CitizenQuasar, he tweeted:

7:59 p.m. "The WAR wWIL start on the steps of the Oklahoma State Capitol. I will cast the first stone. In the meantime, I await the police."

8:01 p.m. "START THE KILLING NOW! I am wiling to be the FIRST DEATH! I Await the police. They will kill me in my home."

8:06 p.m. "After I am killed on the Capitol Steps like REAL man, the rest of you will REMEMBER ME!!!"

8:17 p.m. "I really don' give a shit anymore. Send the cops around. I will cut their heads off the heads and throw the on the State Capitol steps."

Facebook has a policy against any posts that are "hateful, threatening, or pornographic; incite violence; or contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence...violates someone else's rights or the law...or is used to "bully, intimidate, or harass any user." If you violate those rules, your post can be deleted or you can get kicked off Facebook. "The goal of these policies is to strike a very delicate balance between giving people the freedom to express themselves," explains spokesperson Andrew Noyes, and maintaining a safe and trusted environment.

But a simple search through various groups' and individual's sites makes it clear that Facebook can't keep up. For example, it was only after CNET alerted them that Facebook disabled a month-old publicly open "Kill Obama" page with 122 members. One of its goals read, "'We are going to kill Obama. Ten of us will surround the capital, armed with sniper rifles. Mr. Hope And Change just made his last speech." There are enough pro-terrorism posts that Facebook has to "regularly" remove them, according to Noyes. In fact, they've set up a separate page to report that kind of thing. When asked whether they hand that information over to the FBI or DHS, Noyes refused to comment.

It's unclear how much the federal government is using the information about these groups that is right there on the computer screen—which is a good or bad thing, depending on how you look at it. It's a delicate balance between freedom of speech and privacy, versus the common sense to keep an eye on activity that is technically public and only one quick click away.

Right now, Facebook is a goldmine of information (that private businesses, at least, are gladly taking full advantage of). The Web site records and stores all user information through screenshots, documenting what people have viewed and entered on the site, even if it has been untagged or deleted. It seems an obvious source for the feds. But there are serious jurisdictional and constitutional limits to what they can do. For example, it is still unclear whether social networking sites legally constitute public or private information and whether it is fair game to go undercover on the sites.

A spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security told me they don't monitor Facebook generally. "There are specific instances when you can and can't monitor what someone is posting on Facebook or sending in emails," he explained, "There has to be some type of criminal predicate." Likewise, Paul Bresson at the FBI, which admits to looking at such sites in certain examples, explains, "There are First Amendment issues that we are aware of and must respect."

Most social networking sites permit emergency access to information. MySpace, which stores current users' information indefinitely, only requires a search warrant for any private messages, bulletins, or friends lists that are less than 181 days old. Twitter will only hand over information in response to legal process and has no guide for law enforcement procedures. According to a Department of Justice slide presentation on social networking sites [obtained \(pdf\)](#) by the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Facebook is "often cooperative with emergency requests."

The IRS searches the sites to see if you have side businesses you're not reporting, but it has issued clear and strict guidelines that it can only use sites that don't require logging on. The DOJ on the other hand trawls the sites, but hasn't come up with an answer to whether it's allowed to go "undercover" on the sites, taking on fake personas and friending people.

It's not that the extremist groups are so naive as to think there isn't a possibility of being monitored. ARM's Facebook administrator posted that he "wants everyone to stay vigilant and careful about what you discuss to strangers, we are all living under the patriot act now and must act accordingly. remember it does the movement no good if you are sitting in a federal prison."

"Facebook probably is monitored just as much as everything else -- probably more so," says Clifford. "That however, should not stop anyone from exercising their rights. If we just hide and not exercise those rights... we may wake up with none."

Part of the point of posting calls for revolution on Facebook is because it is a public forum and anyone---including the federal government -- can see it.

While much of the content posted on these sites could be unsubstantiated threats and rhetoric---calling for a revolution is very different from actually taking up arms---there is power in words. As Bill Bychowski, who posts about everything from getting Tea Partiers into Congress to the eugenics he thinks drives health care reform to stockpiling weapons, points out that Facebook messages also reach those running for office. "Mostly politicians are copying the [Facebookers'] phrases, using the terms "revolution", "don't retreat, reload", "born again Americans", Global WAR-ming," says Bychoski. "They are paying attention."

When our politicians' response to these calls for an uprising is to co-opt them to win elections, instead of investigate potentially violent crimes, it's time we all pay attention.

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BP Oil Spill: A Slippery Slope to FEMA Detention Camps?

By Stephanie Mencimer [article link](#)

Jun. 3, 2010 | Mother Jones

Mother Jones [home page](#)

Southern Poverty Law Center

Intelligence Report, Spring 2010, Issue Number: 137

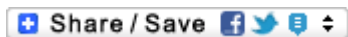
SPLC Rage on the Right [article link](#) The Year in Hate and Extremism

SPLC's August report, "The Second Wave: Return of the Militias," [download report](#) (pdf)

Intelligence Report, Summer 2010, Issue Number: 138

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[Ali Abunimah: The Day the World Became Gaza](#)

The Day the World Became Gaza

by Ali Abunimah [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 3, 2010 | Al Jazeera English | CommonDreams

Since Israel's invasion and massacre of over 1,400 people in Gaza 18 months ago, dubbed Operation Cast Lead, global civil society movements have stepped up their campaigns for justice and solidarity with Palestinians.

Governments, by contrast, carried on with business as usual, maintaining a complicit silence.

Israel's lethal attack on the Freedom Flotilla to Gaza may change that, spurring governments to follow the lead of their people and take unprecedented action to check Israel's growing lawlessness.

Lip service

One of the bitterest images from Operation Cast Lead was that of smiling European Union heads of government visiting Jerusalem and patting Ehud Olmert, the then Israeli prime minister, on the back as white phosphorus still seared the flesh of Palestinian children a few miles away.

Western countries sometimes expressed mild dismay at Israel's "excessive" use of force, but still justified the Gaza massacre as "self-defence" - even though Israel could easily have stopped rocket fire from Gaza, if that was its goal, by returning to the negotiated June 2008 ceasefire it egregiously violated the following November.

When the UN-commissioned Goldstone Report documented the extensive evidence of Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the willful killings of unarmed civilians, few governments paid more than lip service to seeing justice done. Even worse, after Cast Lead, EU countries and the US sent their navies to help Israel enforce a blockade on Gaza which amounts to collective punishment of the entire population and thus violates the Fourth Geneva Convention governing Israel's ongoing occupation.

Not one country sent a hospital ship to help treat or evacuate the thousands of wounded, many with horrific injuries that overwhelmed Gaza's hospitals.

Carrot and stick

The blockade has never been - as Israel and its apologists claim - to stop the smuggling of weapons into Gaza.

Its goal has always been political: to cause the civilian population as much suffering as possible - while still politically excusable - in order for the Palestinians in Gaza to reject and rise up against the Hamas leadership elected in January 2006.

The withholding of food, medicine, schoolbooks, building supplies, among thousands of other items, as well as the right to enter and leave Gaza for any purpose became a weapon to terrorise the civilian population. At the same time, Western aid was showered on the occupied West Bank - whose ordinary people are still only barely better off than in Gaza - in a "carrot and stick" policy calculated to shift support away from Hamas and toward the Western-backed, unelected Palestinian Authority leadership affiliated with the rival Fatah faction, who have repeatedly demonstrated their unconditional willingness to collaborate with Israel no matter what it does to their people. "The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet,

but not to make them die of hunger," senior Israeli government advisor Dov Weisglass notoriously explained in 2006. By this standard the blockade - supported by several Arab governments and the Quartet (the US, EU, UN secretary-general, and Russia) has been a great success, as numerous studies document alarming increases in child malnutrition as the vast majority of Gaza's population became dependent on UN food handouts. Hundreds have died for lack of access to proper medical care.

Filling the 'moral void'

While inaction and complicity characterised the official response, global civil society stepped in to fill the moral and legal void.

In the year and a half since Cast Lead, the global, Palestinian-led campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions on Israel (BDS) has been racking up impressive victories. From the decisions by Norway's pension funds and several European banks to divest from certain Israeli companies, to university divestment initiatives, the refusals by international artists to perform in Israel, or the flashmobs that have brought the consumer boycott to supermarkets around the world, Israel sees BDS as a growing "existential threat". At this point, the effect may be more psychological than economic but it is exactly the feeling of increasing isolation and pariah status that helped push South Africa's apartheid rulers to recognise that their regime was untenable and to seek peaceful change with the very people they had so long demonised, dehumanised and oppressed.

Indeed, the BDS movement is only likely to gather pace: world-best-selling Swedish author Henning Mankell who was among the passengers on the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara kidnapped and taken to Israel, said on being freed: "I think we should use the experience of South Africa, where we know that the sanctions had a great impact." The Freedom Flotilla represented the very best, and most courageous of this civil society spirit and determination not to abandon fellow human beings to the cruelty, indifference and self-interest of governments.

The immediate response to Israel's attack on the Flotilla may indicate that governments too are starting to come out of their slumber and shed the paralysing fear of criticising Israel that has assured its impunity for so long.

Growing gap

Indeed, the global reaction demonstrates the growing gap between the US and Israel on one side and the rest of the world on the other.

While Israeli officials scrambled to offer justifications from the ludicrous (elite commandos armed with paint ball guns) to the benign (the attack was an "inspection"), the US has once again stood behind its ally unconditionally.

As the Obama administration forced a watered-down presidential statement in the UN Security Council, Israeli apologists in the mainstream US media repeatedly attempted to excuse Israel's actions as lawful and legitimate.

Senior administration officials, including Joe Biden, the vice president, openly began to echo their Israeli counterparts that Israel's attack was not only legitimate but justified by its security needs. Despite the predictable and shameless US reaction, international condemnation has been unusually robust. In his speech to the Turkish parliament following the attack, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister, denounced Israeli "state terrorism" and demanded that the international community exact a price.

Erdogan vowed that "Turkey will never turn its back on Gaza," and that it would continue its campaign to lift the blockade and hold Israel accountable even if it had to do so alone.

There are hopeful signs it may not have to.

European and other countries summoned Israeli ambassadors and several recalled their envoys from Tel Aviv.

Franco Frattini, the Italian foreign minister and one of Israel's staunchest apologists in Europe, said his country "absolutely deplored the slaying of civilians" and demanded that Israel "must give an explanation to the international community" of killings he deemed "absolutely unacceptable, whatever the flotilla's aims". Small countries showed the greatest courage and clarity. Nicaragua suspended diplomatic ties completely, citing Israel's "illegal attack". Brian Cowen, Ireland's prime minister, told parliament in Dublin that his government had "formally requested" of Israel that the vessel Rachel Corrie still heading toward Gaza, be allowed to proceed, and warned of the "most serious consequences" should Israel use violence against it. The boat - named after the young American peace activist killed by Israeli occupation forces in Gaza in 2003 - is carrying Malaysian and Irish activists and politicians including Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire.

Crossed a threshold

These are still small actions, but they indicate Israel may have crossed a threshold where it can no longer take appeasement and complicity for granted.

It is a cumulative process - each successive outrage has diminished the reserve of goodwill and forbearance Israel enjoyed.

Even if most governments are not quite ready to go from words to effective actions, growing public outrage will eventually push them to impose official sanctions.

Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, may have hastened that day with his fulsome pride in, and praise for, the slaughter at sea even after the outpouring of international condemnation. Despite its intensive efforts to hide and spin what happened aboard the Mavi Marmara in the early hours of May 31, the world saw Israel use exactly the sort of indiscriminate brutality documented in the Goldstone Report.

This time, however, it was not just "expendable" Palestinians or Lebanese who were Israel's victims - but people from 32 countries and every continent. It was the day the whole world became Gaza. And like the people of Gaza, the world is unlikely to take it lying down.

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Ali Abunimah is author of One Country, A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse and co-founder of [The Electronic Intifada](#).

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Global Condemnation of Israeli Armed Attack on Gaza-Bound Freedom Flotilla

by Amy Goodman [transcript link](#)

June 01, 2010 | Democracy Now!

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America Complicit In Israel's Crimes

By Paul Craig Roberts [article link](#)

June 02, 2010 | Information Clearing House

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Brollier/Kelly: The World Cup of Economic and Military Warfare

The World Cup of Economic and Military Warfare

by Joshua Brollier and Kathy Kelly [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 2, 2010 | VCNV | CommonDreams

Islamabad -- "Our situation is like a football match. The superpower countries are the players, and we are just the ball to be kicked around." This sentiment, expressed by a young man from North Waziristan, has been echoed throughout many of our conversations with ordinary people here in Pakistan and in Afghanistan. Most are baffled that the United States, with the largest and most modern military in the world, can't put a stop to a few thousand militants hiding out in the border regions between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Just about everyone we have spoken with, Pashtuns included, has little to no sympathy for the Taliban or their tactics. Many people have lost limbs, homes and loved ones to the brutal assaults of suicide bombers or the indiscriminate violence of IEDs. Yet, people expressed frustrated confusion over uncertainties regarding U.S. government goals in relation to the Taliban. Some believe that the United States might be working with the ISI (Pakistani Intelligence Services) or at least not working against them, to enable continued Taliban resistance. If there is no resistance, according to this view, a military presence in the region cannot be justified. Nor can a so-called humanitarian presence further flood the Pakistani and Afghan economies with millions of dollars in aid that most often lines the pockets of the politicians, elite bureaucrats, and United States corporations involved in construction and security.

The fact that very little aid money has reached the impoverished and war weary people who need it most has been confirmed to us by members of the Afghan and Pakistani governments, human rights organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and several very unfortunate families forced to live as refugees. As Hyder Akbar, a Pashtun working on NGO assessments in Afghanistan, said to us, "If you are pouring 100 million dollars into a tiny and impoverished province like Kunar and seeing no results, you're obviously doing something wrong." With a population of less than 500,000, you could easily give each Kunar resident over a million dollars. But, several seasoned analysts agree that money alone can't solve problems faced by impoverished people in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Both Dr. Mubashir Hassan, former finance minister of the Peoples Party of Pakistan, and Nur Agha Akbari, from the Ministry of Agriculture in Afghanistan, strongly believe that efforts to bring people out of poverty in South Asia must be initiated, at district and village levels, through consultation with grass roots, indigenous community groups. Mr. Akbari stressed that there is still an opportunity for the United States government and people to play a positive role in Afghanistan, but that role will not be possible until the United States stops giving orders and starts listening to community groups living in Afghanistan.

It's also time that the United States drop the facade of humanitarianism that guides our national discourse concerning Afghanistan and Pakistan. For too long, most people in the United States couldn't find Pakistani areas such as North Waziristan or Orakzai on the map. They had no idea where Helmand or Kandahar were located. Now, with our newspapers less preoccupied by Iraq, we learn to be worried for Afghan and Pakistani women if there is a Taliban take-over in the area. This isn't to say that the United States should not care about the rights of women in both countries or the implications of a spread in extremist ideology. But, military intervention is not curbing the growth of Islamic militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and U.S. "strategic interests" in the area certainly guide most U.S. policy makers more than altruistic concern for women. For instance, the United States government seldom mentions the rights of women who are forced to live, as a result of U.S. policy, in refugee camps just outside of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Women and children almost always have less physical and food security in refugee camps, and they are easier targets for sexual violence.

One doesn't have to spend much time in South Asia to find many people who feel that tactics like the U.S. offensive in Kandahar, torture and indefinite detention at Bagram, and the drone strikes in Pakistan are fanning the flames of resistance and increasing the ranks of violent groups that manipulate Islam for their own purposes.

Muslims in both Pakistan and Afghanistan have asked that we tell people in the United States that Islam is a religion of peace. "A man who uses violence has no religion," says Abbas, a young man from Islamabad.

Students, professors, and human rights advocates in both countries affirmed that relationships, independent of military force, could be built between the people of the U.S. and South Asia. Those who've told us that military force is necessary to confront extremism have invariably added that the timing and control of military action should be in the hands of those who live in the region and know the society.

The United States bears a huge responsibility to make reparations to people of Afghanistan and Pakistan after pursuing nearly 10 years of destructive warfare that has destabilized both countries. There is a looming fear that, in Afghanistan, the United States is going to abandon the country and its people, returning Afghanistan to a Taliban or pre-Taliban era. But the withdrawal of troops does not require the U.S. to abandon Afghanistan. There are models for securing development efforts, in conflict zones, that do not require hundreds of thousands of troops, networks of military bases, and the overwhelming force of aerial surveillance and bombing.

Mr. Abdul Rahman Hotaki, a lawyer and director of the the Afghan Organization of Human Rights & Environmental Protection (AOHREP), points out that, roughly, only 20 percent of the funds given the U.S. Army Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) ever reach the stage of investment in an actual project. Even when PRTs effectively build a road or a school, gaining the trust of a community is problematic because the lines between military and humanitarian work become blurred. Schools, roads and other projects are often sabotaged under the suspicion that the projects are built more to serve U.S. imperialistic interests than to help Afghans.

In Afghanistan, it's helpful to evaluate the construction of schools by Community Development Councils (CDCs) which, from start to finish, included participation of people living in the locale where the school was being built. In the CDC model, communities start by putting up some funds or guarantees in advance of the project and then provide their own security throughout the process. Ashraf Ghani, former finance minister of Afghanistan, initiated the setup of these CDCs under the National Solidarity Project, which was loosely based on a model proposed by Nur Agha Akbari and Ahmad Shah Massoud. Not a single school built by the CDCs has been attacked by Taliban or other forces. Hyder Akbar attributes this to the sense of ownership by the community which creates security for the schools. USAID and other international donors have lauded such models but then revoked funding before projects could get off the ground. Both Mr. Nur Agha Akbari and Mr. Abdul Rehman Hotaki expressed frustration about having been involved in extensive preparation for CDC modeled projects, only to see their communities let down when donors from the U.S. and Canada decided they had other priorities.

The Italian NGO, Emergency, provides another solid example of dedication to Afghanistan that both philosophically and practically surpasses the United States' policy of continued warfare as a means to achieve security. Emergency's goal is providing health care and medical treatment to civilian victims of war and poverty. And they do it well. Their involvement in Afghanistan first began in 1999 through construction of a Surgical Centre in Anabah, a village in the Panjshir Valley. Emergency has since developed three major hospitals and 28 first aid posts and medical centers, treating over 2.5 million people. They treat all sides in a conflict without discrimination and they charge nothing to their patients. Although they operate on a modest budget and can't afford to pay the higher salaries offered by other NGOs, they attract and keep employees who admire Emergency's work. Their employment rosters steadily show staffing that is half Afghan and half international. Most employees we met told us they are motivated by principle rather than profit. "Utopia? No," says Emergency's founder, Dr. Gino Strada, M.D., "We are convinced that the abolition of war is a political project to realize, with great urgency. For this we cannot be silent in the face of war, any war. We are guilty of proposing the abolition of war."

Altruistic principles are evidently not driving the continued presence of the defense corporations operating in Afghanistan. As Bill Quigley, legal director of New York City's Center for Constitutional Rights points out, executives for the three largest U.S. defense corporations, Northrup Grumman, Lockheed Martin and Boeing, have received a combined 177 million dollars in personal compensation over the past three years. With profits rolling in at this rate, there is not much incentive for weapons suppliers to encourage the Obama administration to enact a speedy withdrawal of U.S. forces and their weapons from Afghanistan.

Even the NGOs and aid organizations have something to gain from a continued war economy. Peter Marsden, author of *Afghanistan: Aid, Armies and Empires*, worked with British NGOs in Afghanistan from 1989 to 2005. His book describes the way in which the United States has provided money for its own NGOs instead of directing money to the Afghan

government. This policy causes a flood of overpaid charity workers from all over the world, most of whom buy supplies from their own countries. Not only do they spend their money elsewhere, but these aid workers usually draw a salary as large as 150 to 300 times the average Afghan income, which sits around \$200, per person, per year.

Though the United States constantly threatens and carries out drone strikes in Pakistan, the Obama Administration insists that it has goodwill towards Pakistan and that the U.S. economic and military presence in the country is intended to be mutually beneficial.

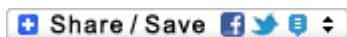
In its most recent National Security Strategy outline, the White House proposes to build cooperation with its international partners through "governance reform of the IMF and the World Bank." The administration also says it is renewing U.S. leadership in the IMF, leveraging its engagement and investments, to "strengthen the global economy" and "lift people out of poverty."

This rhetoric falls short of reality in Pakistan where the IMF, under U.S. leadership, is pushing through an aid package of US\$ 7.27 billion for the Pakistani economy. On the surface, \$7.27 billion dollars sounds quite generous, but the deal will subordinate Pakistan to U.S. military and strategic interests and comes with another string attached, the Value Added Tax (VAT). Quite contrary to "lifting people out of poverty," the VAT amounts to an additional 15% sales tax on Pakistani products throughout every step of production. Practically, it amounts to a tax on the poor in a country that already has 60 million persons living below the poverty line and inflation reaching 40%. There have been demonstrations against the VAT and U.S. interference in Pakistan nearly every day throughout the past month that we have been in the country.

There is no simple answer or brilliant conspiracy theory that sums up exactly why the United States is at war in Afghanistan and Pakistan. War profiteering, energy resources, the Trans-Afghan pipeline, strategic geo-political positioning and even the narcotics trade may all play a part. But whatever the case, it is clear that the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan have become a football to be kicked about by the powerful players in world politics. If the United States truly wants to move away from this sort of selfish strategy and be appreciated as a genuine partner in the region, it should move towards an approach that values the lives and input of those most vulnerable in Afghan and Pakistani society.

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Wednesday, June 2, 2010

[Jim Hightower: Government Impotence and Corporate Rule](#)

Government Impotence and Corporate Rule

by Jim Hightower [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 2, 2010 | Creators Syndicate | CommonDreams

Many news reports about the Gulf oil catastrophe refer to it as a "spill." Wrong. A spill is a minor "oops" — one accidentally spills milks, for example, and from childhood, we're taught the old aphorism: "Don't cry over spilt milk." What's in the Gulf isn't milk and it wasn't spilt. The explosion of BP's Deepwater Horizon well was the inevitable result of deliberate decisions made by avaricious corporate executives, laissez faire politicians and obsequious regulators.

As the ruinous gulf oil blowout spreads onto land, over wildlife, across the ocean floor and into people's lives, it raises a fundamental question for all of us Americans: Who the hell's in charge here? What we're witnessing is not merely a human and environmental horror, but also an appalling deterioration in our nation's governance. Just as we saw in Wall Street's

devastating economic disaster and in Massey Energy's murderous explosion inside its Upper Big Branch coal mine, the nastiness in the gulf is baring an ugly truth that We the People must finally face: We are living under de facto corporate rule that has rendered our government impotent.

Thirty years of laissez-faire, ideological nonsense (pushed upon us with a vengeance in the past decade) has transformed government into a subsidiary of corporate power. Wall Street, Massey, BP and its partners — all were allowed to become their own "regulators" and officially encouraged to put their short-term profit interests over the public interest.

Let's not forget that on April 2, barely two weeks before Deepwater Horizon blew and 11 people perished on the spot, the public's No. 1 official, Barack Obama, trumpeted his support for more deepwater oil drilling, blithely regurgitating Big Oil's big lie: "Oil rigs today generally don't cause spills." He and his advisors had not bothered to check the truth of that — they simply took the industry's word. That's not governing, it's aiding and abetting profiteers, and it's a pathetic performance.

But that was only the start of Washington's oily confession that it has surrendered control to corporate arrogance and avarice.

With an unprecedented volume of crude gushing from the well and the magnitude of the disaster multiplying geometrically by the day, who was in charge of coping with that? Not the White House, not the interior secretary, not the EPA. As we saw when Wall Street's greed exploded our economy, the polluting scoundrels were left in charge!

While BP's dapper CEO issued patently ridiculous statements (such as, "Everything we can see at the moment suggests that the overall environmental impact of this will be very, very modest."), our government blindly went along with BP's false assertion that only some 5,000 barrels a day were pouring from the well, when independent experts were shouting at the White House that the correct volume was up to 19 times that much.

Finally, almost a month after the blowout, Obama ordered a moratorium on drilling new offshore wells and on granting environmental waivers to the oil giants. Bravo, Mr. President! But ... his moratorium was simply ignored. Days after his order, oil companies were handed at least seven more drilling permits and five waivers.

Last week, with 63 percent of the public disapproving of his meek deference to BP, the president of the United States of America was reduced to convening a press conference to insist that he was "engaged" and, behind the scenes, was "monitoring" BP's efforts.

Wow, monitoring! Excuse me, but who's the president here? Obama should personally take charge —cancel all of his social and political events, convene an emergency response team of the best scientific minds in the world, announce a clear plan of clean-up actions, install all relevant Cabinet officials in a Gulf Coast command center to direct the actions, make daily reports on progress to the public, fire a mess of failed regulators and go to Congress with sweeping legislation to replace America's oil dependency with a crash program of conservation and renewable energy sources.

Oh, he should also wring a few corporate necks. Instead of monitoring these criminals, prosecute them — and put the public back in charge of our government.

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National radio commentator, writer, public speaker, and author of the book, [Swim Against The Current: Even A Dead Fish Can Go With The Flow](#), **Jim Hightower** has spent three decades battling the Powers That Be on behalf of the Powers That Ought To Be - consumers, working families, environmentalists, small businesses, and just-plain-folks.

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Wednesday, June 2, 2010

Gun Control: Countering Misleading Claims

"**Do no harm, cause no loss**" is the responsibility of an armed citizenry, the "common law of the land" where we knowingly act as the surety of-and-for our family-community(-ies). [MMr]

IANSA

NRA News: UN Doomsday Treaty

by Ginny Simone [video link](#)

06.01.10 | NRA | Silver Bear Cafe

National Rifle Association (NRA) [home page](#)

National Firearms Association (Canada) [home page](#)

The Silver Bear Cafe [home page](#)

Gary Mauser, Ph D Professor Emeritus

Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies

Faculty of Business Administration

Simon Fraser University Burnaby BC, CANADA

To: Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Re: Bill C-391 - Countering Ten Misleading Claims

In response to the misleading claims made by the Coalition for Gun Control

Presentation By Dr. Gary Mauser [article link](#)

Gary Mauser [home page](#)

Firearms Canada [home page](#)

Canadian Firearms Program (RCMP) [home page](#)

Gun Ownership: Rights and Responsibilities of Law-Abiding Citizens

Massad Ayoob on Guns

Backwoods Home Magazine

Massad Ayoob [blog home](#)

Massad Ayoob [Archive](#) for the 'Firearm Owner's Civil Rights'

Top Ten Gun Control Myths

By Todays Survival Show [article link](#)

January 11th, 2010

Gun safety, gun control, and other firearms information [web page](#)

Handgun Worldshow

[Episode 20](#) – **Gun Control Debate: Both sides of the issue**

December 18th, 2009

[Episode 22](#) – **11 reasons why people own guns and why you should too**

December 31st, 2009 | Bob Mayne

Handgun World Show [home page](#)

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Giordano Bruno [article link](#)

01/26/2010 | Neithercorp Press

Survival is about more than living, it is about more than believing, it is about KNOWING. Knowing what the world should be, and knowing what the world should not be. Knowing in an intuitive way, beyond simple examination and observation. Knowing from a deeper perspective.

In the end, our survival and the survival of our ideals depends not only on our two hands, our cleverness, or even our fear of death, but the content of each man's heart, and how much of that content he is willing to trust.

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What is IANSA?

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) is the global movement against gun violence - a network of 800 civil society organisations working in 120 countries to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW). IANSA seeks to make people safer from gun violence by securing stronger regulation on guns in society and better controls on arms exports. It represents the voices of civil society on the international stage, for example in the UN process on small arms, and draws on the practical experience of its members to campaign for policies that will protect human security.

IANSA is composed of a wide range of organisations concerned with small arms, including policy development organisations, national gun control groups, women's groups, research institutes, aid agencies, faith groups, survivors, human rights and community action organisations.

Canada

This nation of 31 million has an estimated 6.2 million firearms in circulation, of which about five million are rifles and shotguns. About one in four Canadians owns a gun, though it varies significantly by region. Long guns are responsible for the majority of gun crime in Canada, though handguns and other restricted firearms smuggled in from the United States are prevalent in crime.

Public advocacy to reform Canada's domestic firearms laws grew in 1989 after a mass shooting in Montreal in which one individual shot 28 people, killing 14 of them. All of those killed were women.

As of 2001, all Canadian firearm owners are required to be licensed. Following the passage of the national Firearms Act, all firearms are now subject to registration, as well.

Canada is not a significant manufacturer or exporter of firearms.

IANSA participants in Canada are working to:

- * defend the new gun registration law from attempts to overturn it
- * educate the public and policymakers on further measures to reduce gun violence
- * engage in international efforts to achieve stronger regulations of the arms trade

The United States

From 1993-2000, the U.S. was the leading supplier of conventional arms to the developing world, with sales of USD 61.5 billion. In 1999, the U.S. manufactured over four million firearms for domestic sale or export.

More than 300 U.S. companies produce arms and/or ammunition, and the country is estimated to have one of the world's largest domestic markets for small arms. An estimated 34% of the nation's 280 million citizens own personal firearms, and there are thought to be over 200 million firearms in private hands.

Private gun ownership is generally not subject to either licensing or registration. The private resale of guns is largely unregulated in the United States, making it difficult to prevent their acquisition by youth, criminals, and other prohibited individuals.

Guns are a significant cause of death among U.S. citizens, especially urban minorities and youth. Firearm homicide and suicide rates are the highest in the developed world. The majority of domestic gun violence is attributable to handguns.

IANSA participants in the United States are working to:

- * research the health and social impact of guns
- * educate the public on the risks of firearm ownership
- * promote policies to prevent criminal and youth access to guns
- * apply consumer product regulations to the gun industry
- * support international efforts to curb the proliferation of small arms

Laws on civilian ownership of handguns in 16 countries [download pdf](#)

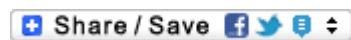
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Paul Craig Roberts: The USA is a "Failed State"

A Plague Upon The World: The USA is a "Failed State"

Interview with Dr. Paul Craig Roberts

by Dr. Paul Craig Roberts [article link](#)

June 2, 2010 | Global Research

Interview with Dr. Paul Craig Roberts, former Assistant Secretary US Treasury, Associate Editor Wall Street Journal, Professor of Political Economy Center for Strategic and International Studies Georgetown University Washington DC.

Question: Dr. Roberts, the United States is regarded as the most successful state in the world today. What is responsible for American success?

Dr. Roberts: Propaganda. If truth be known, the US is a failed state. More about that later. The US owes its image of success to: (1) the vast lands and mineral resources that the US “liberated” with violence from the native inhabitants, (2) Europe’s, especially Great Britain’s, self-destruction in World War I and World War II, and (3) the economic destruction of Russia and most of Asia by communism or socialism.

After World War II, the US took the reserve currency role from Great Britain. This made the US dollar the world money and permitted the US to pay its import bills in its own currency. World War II’s destruction of the other industrialized countries left the US as the only country capable of supplying products to world markets. This historical happenstance created among Americans the impression that they were a favored people. Today the militarist neoconservatives speak of the United States as “the indispensable nation.” In other words, Americans are above all others, except, of course, Israelis.

To American eyes a vague “terrorist threat,” a creation of their own government, is sufficient justification for naked aggression against Muslim peoples and for an agenda of world hegemony.

This hubristic attitude explains why among most Americans there is no remorse over the one million Iraqis killed and the four million Iraqis displaced by a US invasion and occupation that were based entirely on lies and deception. It explains why there is no remorse among most Americans for the countless numbers of Afghans who have been cavalierly murdered by the US military, or for the Pakistani civilians murdered by US drones and “soldiers” sitting in front of video screens. It explains why there is no outrage among Americans when the Israelis bomb Lebanese civilians and Gaza civilians. No one in the world will believe that Israel’s latest act of barbarity, the murderous attack on the international aid flotilla to Gaza, was not cleared with Israel’s American enabler.

Question: You said that the US was a failed state. How can that be? What do you mean?

Roberts: The war on terror, invented by the George W. Bush/Dick Cheney regime, destroyed the US Constitution and the civil liberties that the Constitution embodies. The Bill of Rights has been eviscerated. The Obama regime has institutionalized the Bush/Cheney assault on American liberty. Today, no American has any rights if he or she is accused of “terrorist” activity. The Obama regime has expanded the vague definition of “terrorist activity” to include “domestic extremist,” another undefined and vague category subject to the government’s discretion. In short, a “terrorist” or a “domestic extremist” is anyone who dissents from a policy or a practice that the US government regards as necessary for its agenda of world hegemony.

Unlike some countries, the US is not an ethnic group. It is a collection of diverse peoples united under the Constitution. When the Constitution was destroyed, the US ceased to exist. What exists today are power centers that are unaccountable. Elections mean nothing, as both parties are dependent on the same powerful interest groups for campaign funds. The most powerful interest groups are the military/security complex, which includes the Pentagon, the CIA, and the corporations that service them, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, the oil industry that is destroying the Gulf of Mexico, Wall Street (investment banks and hedge funds), the insurance companies, the pharmaceutical companies, and the agri-companies that produce food of questionable content.

These corporate powers comprise an oligarchy that cannot be dislodged by voting. Ever since “globalism” was enacted into law, the Democrats have been dependent on the same corporate sources of income as the Republicans, because globalism destroyed the labor unions. Consequently, there is no difference between the Republicans and Democrats, or no meaningful difference.

The “war on terror” completed the constitutional/legal failure of the US. The US has also failed economically. Under Wall Street pressure for short-term profits, US corporations have moved offshore their production for US consumer markets. The result has been to move US GDP and millions of well-paid US jobs to countries, such as China and India, where labor and professional expertise are cheap. This practice has been going on since about 1990.

After 20 years of offshoring US production, which destroyed American jobs and federal, state and local tax base, the US unemployment rate, as measured by US government methodology in 1980, is over 20 percent. The ladders of upward mobility have been dismantled. Millions of young Americans with university degrees are employed as waitresses and

bartenders. Foreign enrollment comprises a larger and larger percentage of US universities as the American population finds that a university degree has been negated by the offshoring of the jobs that the graduates expected.

When US offshored production re-enters the US as imports, the trade balance deteriorates. Foreigners use their surplus dollars to purchase existing US assets.

Consequently, dividends, interest, capital gains, tolls from toll roads, rents, and profits, now flow abroad to foreign owners, thus increasing the pressure on the US dollar. The US has been able to survive the mounting claims of foreigners against US GDP because the US dollar is the reserve currency. However, the large US budget and trade deficits will put pressures on the dollar that will become too extreme for the dollar to be able to sustain this role. When the dollar fails, the US population will be impoverished.

The US is heavily indebted, both the government and the citizens. Over the last decade there has been no growth in family income. The US economy was kept going through the expansion of consumer debt. Now consumers are so heavily indebted that they cannot borrow more. This means that the main driving force of the US economy, consumer demand, cannot increase. As consumer demand comprises 70% of the economy, when consumer demand cannot increase, there can be no economic recovery.

The US is a failed state also because there is no accountability to the people by corporations or by government at any level, whether state, local, or federal. British Petroleum is destroying the Gulf of Mexico. The US government has done nothing. The Obama regime's response to the crisis is more irresponsible than the Bush regime's response to Hurricane Katrina. Wetlands and fisheries are being destroyed by unregulated capitalist greed and by a government that treats the environment with contempt. The tourist economy of Florida is being destroyed. The external costs of drilling in deep waters exceeds the net worth of the oil industry. As a result of the failure of the American state, the oil industry is destroying one of the world's most valuable ecological systems.

Question: What can be done?

Roberts: The American people are lost in la-la land. They have no idea that their civil liberties have been forfeited. They are only gradually learning that their economic future is compromised. They have little idea of the world's growing hatred of Americans for their destruction of other peoples. In short, Americans are full of themselves. They have no idea of the disasters that their ignorance and inhumanity have brought upon themselves and upon the world.

Much of the world, looking at a country that appears both stupid and inhumane, wonders at Americans' fine opinion of themselves. Is America the virtuous "indispensable nation" of neoconservative propaganda, or is America a plague upon the world?

Paul Craig Roberts is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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American Denial: Living in a Can't-Do Nation

By Tom Engelhardt [article link](#) [article link](#)

June 01, 2010 | TomDispatch | ICH

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Wall Street's War

By Matt Taibbi [article link](#) [article link](#)

May 26, 2010 | Rolling Stone | ICH

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Tuesday, June 1, 2010

[Chris Hedges: This Country Needs a Few Good Communists](#)

This Country Needs a Few Good Communists

by: Chris Hedges [article link](#) [article link](#)

Tuesday 01 June 2010 | t r u t h o u t | Truthdig

The witch hunts against communists in the United States were used to silence socialists, anarchists, pacifists and all those who defied the abuses of capitalism. Those "anti-Red" actions were devastating blows to the political health of the country. The communists spoke the language of class war. They understood that Wall Street, along with corporations such as British Petroleum, is the enemy. They offered a broad social vision which allowed even the non-communist left to employ a vocabulary that made sense of the destructive impulses of capitalism. But once the Communist Party, along with other radical movements, was eradicated as a social and political force, once the liberal class took government-imposed loyalty oaths and collaborated in the witch hunts for phantom communist agents, we were robbed of the ability to make sense of our struggle. We became fearful, timid and ineffectual. We lost our voice and became part of the corporate structure we should have been dismantling.

Hope in this age of bankrupt capitalism will come with the return of the language of class conflict. It does not mean we have to agree with Karl Marx, who advocated violence and whose worship of the state as a utopian mechanism led to another form of enslavement of the working class, but we have to speak in the vocabulary Marx employed. We have to grasp, as Marx did, that corporations are not concerned with the common good. They exploit, pollute, impoverish, repress, kill and lie to make money. They throw poor families out of homes, let the uninsured die, wage useless wars to make profits, poison and pollute the ecosystem, slash social assistance programs, gut public education, trash the global economy, loot the U.S. Treasury and crush all popular movements that seek justice for working men and women. They worship only money and power. And, as Marx knew, unfettered capitalism is a revolutionary force that consumes greater and greater numbers of human lives until it finally consumes itself. The nightmare in the Gulf of Mexico is the perfect metaphor for the corporate state. It is the same nightmare seen in postindustrial pockets from the old mill towns in New England to the abandoned steel mills in Ohio. It is a nightmare that Iraqis, Pakistanis and Afghans, mourning their dead, live each day.

Capitalism was once viewed in America as a system that had to be fought. But capitalism is no longer challenged. And so, even as Wall Street steals billions of taxpayer dollars and the Gulf of Mexico is turned into a toxic swamp, we do not know what to do or say. We decry the excesses of capitalism without demanding a dismantling of the corporate state. The liberal class has a misguided loyalty, illustrated by environmental groups that have refused to excoriate the Obama White House over the ecological catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico. Liberals bow before a Democratic Party that ignores them and does the bidding of corporations. The reflexive deference to the Democrats by the liberal class is the result of cowardice and fear. It is also the result of an infantile understanding of the mechanisms of power. The divide is not between Republican and Democrat. It is a divide between the corporate state and the citizen. It is a divide between capitalists and workers. And, for all the failings of the communists, they got it.

Unions, organizations formerly steeped in the doctrine of class warfare and filled with those who sought broad social and political rights for the working class, have been transformed into domesticated partners of the capitalist class. They have been reduced to simple bartering tools. The social demands of unions early in the 20th century that gave the working class weekends off, the right to strike, the eight-hour day and Social Security have been abandoned. Universities, especially in political science and economics departments, parrot the discredited ideology of unregulated capitalism and have no new ideas. Artistic expression, along with most religious worship, is largely self-absorbed narcissism. The Democratic Party and the press have become corporate servants. The loss of radicals within the labor movement, the Democratic Party, the arts, the church and the universities has obliterated one of the most important counterweights to the corporate state. And the purging of those radicals has left us unable to make sense of what is happening to us.

The fear of communism, like the fear of Islamic terrorism, has resulted in the steady suspension of civil liberties, including freedom of speech, habeas corpus and the right to organize, values the liberal class claims to support. It was the orchestration of fear that permitted the capitalist class to ram through the Taft-Hartley Act in 1948 in the name of anti-communism, the most destructive legislative blow to the working class until the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It was fear that created the Patriot Act, extraordinary rendition, offshore penal colonies where we torture and the endless wars in the Middle East. And it was fear that was used to see us fleeced by Wall Street. If we do not stop being afraid and name our enemy we will continue toward a state of neofeudalism.

The robber barons of the late 19th century used goons and thugs to beat up workers and retain control. The corporations, employing the science of public relations, have used actors, artists, writers, scholars and filmmakers to manipulate and shape public opinion. Corporations employ the college-educated, liberal elite to saturate the culture with lies. The liberal class should have defied the emasculation of radical organizations, including the Communist Party. Instead, it was lured into the corporate embrace. It became a class of collaborators. National cohesion, because our intellectual life has become so impoverished, revolves around the empty pursuits of mass culture, brands, consumption, status and the bland uniformity of opinions disseminated by corporate-friendly courtiers. We speak and think in the empty slogans and clichés we are given. And they are given to us by the liberal class.

The "idea of the intellectual vocation," as Irving Howe pointed out in his essay "The Age of Conformity," "the idea of a life dedicated to values that cannot possibly be realized by a commercial civilization—has gradually lost its allure. And, it is this, rather than the abandonment of a particular program, which constitutes our rout." The belief that capitalism is the unassailable engine of human progress, Howe added, "is trumpeted through every medium of communication: official propaganda, institutional advertising and scholarly writings of people who, until a few years ago, were its major opponents."

"The truly powerless people are those intellectuals—the new realists—who attach themselves to the seats of power, where they surrender their freedom of expression without gaining any significance as political figures," Howe wrote. "For it is crucial to the history of the American intellectuals in the past few decades—as well as to the relationship between 'wealth' and 'intellect'—that whenever they become absorbed into the accredited institutions of society they not only lose their traditional rebelliousness but to one extent or another they cease to function as intellectuals. The institutional world needs intellectuals because they are intellectuals but it does not want them as intellectuals. It beckons to them because of what they are but it will not allow them, at least within its sphere of articulation, either to remain or entirely cease being what they are. It needs them for their knowledge, their talent, their inclinations and passions; it insists that they retain a measure of these endowments, which it means to employ for its own ends, and without which the intellectuals would be of no use to it whatever. A simplified but useful equation suggests itself: the relation of the institutional world to the intellectuals is as the relation of middlebrow culture to serious culture, the one batters on the other, absorbs and raids it with increasing frequency and skill, subsidizes and encourages it enough to make further raids possible—at times the parasite will support its victim. Surely this relationship must be one reason for the high incidence of neurosis that is supposed to prevail among intellectuals. A total estrangement from the sources of power and prestige, even a blind unreasoning rejection of every aspect of our culture, would be far healthier if only because it would permit a free discharge of aggression."

The liberal class prefers comfort to confrontation. It will not challenge the decaying structures of the corporate state. It is intolerant within its ranks of those who do. It clings pathetically to the carcass of the Obama presidency. It has been exposed as a dead force in American politics. We must find our way back to the old radicals, to the discredited Marxists, socialists and anarchists, including Dwight Macdonald and Dorothy Day. Language is our first step toward salvation. We cannot fight what we cannot describe.

Chris Hedges, is a senior fellow at The Nation Institute in New York City. He spent nearly two decades as a foreign correspondent in Central America, the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans. He has reported from more than 50 countries and has worked for The Christian Science Monitor, National Public Radio, The Dallas Morning News and The New York Times, for which he was a foreign correspondent for 15 years.

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Monday, May 31, 2010

[Gary D. Barnett: War to Quell the Tide of Economic Unrest?](#)

Is the U.S. Government Planning War to Quell the Tide of Economic Unrest?

By Gary D. Barnett [article link](#) [article link](#)

May 30, 2010 | Lew Rockwell | ICH

In my opinion and in a word: Yes!

Headlines:

“READY FOR WAR,” “U.S. Military told to get ready in Korea Standoff, Obama orders commanders to prepare ‘to deter future aggression.’” By Drudge and MSNBC

“U.S. Begins Massive Military Build Up Around Iran, Sending Up To 4 New Carrier Groups In Region” by Tyler Durden

“Clinton: Korea Must Face ‘Consequences’ For Sunken Warship”

Homeland Security, Northeast Intelligence Network: “The Syrian Missile Crisis: Threat of War Very Real”

“The Expanding U.S. War in Pakistan” by Jeremy Scahill

“Yemen, Latest War Front?” by CBS News

These are but a very few of the recent headlines about more U.S. war, but the Iranian and Korean situations are the most dangerous, and the threats against Iran I think the most real.

United States wars are virtually all wars of aggression, so it is quite evident that U.S. wars are “fought” for reasons other than self-defense. That means there are ulterior motives involved that are not related to moral behavior, but instead to nefarious intent. This is a disturbing revelation, and one little understood by the American masses. It is one however, that if more understood, could literally blow the lid off the notion that the purposeful buildup of the military–industrial complex is for the defense of this nation! This thought scares the life out of those in power who need to keep the populace scared to death at all times in order to propagate their crimes.

Our economy, as is the case for much of the rest of the world’s economies, is currently imploding. Since all major economies in the world are based on valueless, un-backed, and worthless money, this situation should have been evident to the mainstream long ago. Of course the failing economy is just one piece of the puzzle, but it is most definitely the most important piece. With a so-called vibrant economy over the past decade or so, even though it was based on lies and deceit, and was a complete sham, the general population was easy to control during these so-called “prosperous” times. With the real economy now being exposed for the fraud that it is, and the real risks becoming more evident, the once complacent citizen is now becoming angry. Because of this, the evil U.S. federal government must find a new method of fooling the masses into believing in “their” government and country. War is the obvious answer, as war solidifies the putrid and false nationalistic worship of the peasants more than any other ploy.

In my opinion, any bad economic news, any exposure of the current economic fraud, any sovereign government risk of collapse, any higher unemployment or excessive price inflation, will anger the majority and vastly escalate the government’s need to start another war. It cannot afford to let the situation get out of hand, as there are many more of us

than there are of them, so whatever becomes necessary in the mind of government in order for it to effect its manipulation and control over the people will be implemented. If that is a purposely orchestrated and unnecessary war, then so be it.

The openness of these plans and the blatant steps being taken by the federal government to protect its power are disturbing to say the least. Even with this openness however, most are still in the dark. Since 2001, our civil rights have been for the most part destroyed. Laws have been enacted that allow the government to capture and hold indefinitely any citizen it deems a risk, and without the possibility of charge or trial. Legislation to open and construct holding camps [[see here](#)] has been proposed and plans to implement this process are being prepared for today. [Martial Law](#) is now not just a possibility but a probability. This government in my opinion is at the same time preparing for both Martial Law and war to quell the tide of possible civil unrest due to economic instability or collapse. This is astounding, as both ends of the spectrum are being covered by Leviathan's planned course of action. This should frighten all of us!

This time around the false flag event(s) leading to another war should immediately be scrutinized and brought to light, and those who expose the forthcoming government and neo-con lies should not be considered conspiracy nuts, but rather truth-tellers and heroes. I am warning you in advance, as so many others have done before me, that the next war will be pre-planned and calculated. The federal government's actions are no longer hidden, and the motive for its criminal and murderous behavior is there for all to see. Obviously, those who now rule over us are confused and dazed, but they are nonetheless prepared to do what is necessary to keep their position of power intact. This government will not consider the means, but only the ends, so that justification will then become more palatable to those so easy to fool.

The dangers of this situation are tremendous. A war with Iran will upset not only the entire Middle East, but the whole world. The terrorism risk due to blowback will increase dramatically; this in and of itself helping the guilty government to perpetuate the crime, all the while gaining even more power and authority over us. Not only will many more innocents abroad be murdered, but many more Americans will also have to die as fodder for the cause of the elite.

These situations are not accidental but designed, and they are designed so that the few can survive in luxury, while the rest of us suffer. When will the common man come to the realization that government in a now totalitarian society like ours is not of the people, by the people, and for the people, but that people are of the government, by the government, and for the government? Only when all individuals are sovereign and free, and in total control of the State will this paradigm shift back to its original design.

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The Prettification of War

A Big Dose of Servile Journalism for Memorial Day

by John V. Walsh [article link](#)

May 31, 2010 | LewRockwell

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The Lew Rockwell Show [home page](#)

Dick Cheney's Song of America

By David Armstrong [article link](#)

Harper's Magazine, Oct 2002, Vol. 305, Issue 1829 | ICH

The Plan is for the United States to rule the world. The overt theme is unilateralism, but it is ultimately a story of domination. It calls for the United States to maintain its overwhelming military superiority and prevent new rivals from rising up to challenge it on the world stage. It calls for dominion over friends and enemies alike. It says not that the United States must be more powerful, or most powerful, but that it must be absolutely powerful.

U.S. Defence Spending Far Outpaces Rest of the World

By Amanda Bransford [article link](#) [article link](#)

NEW YORK, May 28, 2010 | IPS | ICH

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Shock and Audit

We dissect the Pentagon's budget so you don't have to.

by Rachel Morris [special report](#) [report\(pdf\)](#)

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Warning Signs Of Full Spectrum Collapse Are Everywhere

By Giordano Bruno [article link](#)

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The Depression Of 2011?

23 Economic Warning Signs From Financial Authorities All Over The Globe

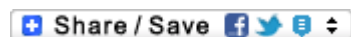
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Camillo "Mac" Bica: Memorial Day: Celebrating Militarism and the Weapons of War

Memorial Day: Celebrating Militarism and the Weapons of War

Corporatizing and Militarizing Memorial Day for "Fun" and Profit

By Camillo "Mac" Bica [article link](#) [article link](#)

May 30, 2010 | truthout | Information Clearing House

Since the beginning of the twentieth century some 650,000 Americans have died fighting this Country's many wars. Regardless of political affiliation and ideology, every American ought reverence such selfless sacrifice and understand and share the grief that this tragic loss of life entails. Though those of us who have known war hear the cries of the dying forever in our mind and suffer the pain and loss each day of our lives and need no holiday to remind us, Memorial Day is the occasion this nation sets aside to remember, to grieve, and to honor those who chose or were compelled to sacrifice their lives in behalf of a cause they believed just.

Air shows, "exciting" demonstrations of the high tech, billion dollar, implements of war have become an increasingly popular way to "celebrate" Memorial Day in many parts of the Country. The Southern Wisconsin Air fest, and Missouri's Salute to Veterans 2010 are just two examples. Attracting thousands, in some cases tens of thousands, these extravaganzas have become prime locations for military recruitment. The Army's "Strength in Action Tour" regularly exploits such events "entertaining," "informing", and ultimately motivating young people to enlist. With its enormous budget, Army recruiters set up what is, for all intents and purposes, a mobile military circus and amusement arcade. Passersby, some as young as ten years old, need only provide their contact information into the Army database to receive an array of Army recruitment material and souvenirs – personalized dog tags, tee shirts, hats, footballs, etc. Once registered, students are encouraged to become "Army Strong," that is, participate in interactive physical fitness events such as climbing the "U.S. Army Rock Wall" ("strength of body," "rock strong"), "perform virtual music" on a stage in front of their peers ("strength to lead"), operate small remote control robotic devices known as Packbots through an obstacle course ("strength of technology"),

“pilot” an Apache helicopter flight simulator (“strength to soar”), or “participate in a fully immersive, adrenaline-pumping, highly realistic (Humvee) experience” in which they conduct a “virtual mission,” engage “insurgents,” and kill them (“strength of team”).

Sadly, Americans need to be reminded that Memorial Day is not about sales at the mall, barbecues, and picnics. Neither is it a time to celebrate militarism, the machinery of war, or entice young people, through highly manipulative and deceptive practices, into enlisting in the military. While such spectacles may be exhilarating to some and perhaps suitable for other occasions (perhaps Armed Forces Day or the Fourth of July), they are totally inappropriate and irreverent during the only time of the year set aside for remembering and grieving those who made the ultimate sacrifice, Memorial Day weekend.

Most importantly, it is not about exploiting patriotism and the sacrifices of our young Servicemen and Women for purposes of commercial marketing and corporate profit. The following is an excerpt from the Bethpage Federal Credit Unions 2009 New York Air Show Website, perhaps the mother of all such “celebrations” of the implements of death and destruction.

“If your company would like to go beyond typical marketing . . . Huge family participation coupled with the extraordinary setting makes the air show at Jones Beach a great opportunity for corporate sponsorship and VIP hospitality. **Our participating sponsors link their brand with the exciting, patriotic event as they host their most valued clients, employees, family and friends in a truly first class setting.** Hospitality tents lined up along the beachfront offer private beach enclosures and can be tailored to meet each sponsor’s specific marketing aim . . . The Business Package includes 10 Tickets to the Jones Beach VIP Tent, and 4 VIP Parking Passes and you may also hang a small Corporate Banner inside the tent.” Cost: \$2000.00 (emphasis mine)

If the exhilarating and orgasmic air show is not enough, revelers can also celebrate the 10th anniversary of Long Island’s American Air Power Museum. On this Memorial Day weekend 2010, now renamed “Salute to the Legends of Air Power” weekend, for just \$35 “you can attend an exclusive event for sponsors, VIPs, and Air Show performers. A night of big band music, Warbird calendar pinups, Air Show pilot meet and greet, (view) Warbird and military aircraft, plus a private sunset Warbird flight demonstration . . . It doesn’t get any better than this.” Well perhaps it does. For just an additional \$425 you can actually fly on a fully restored B17 aircraft, perhaps imagine yourself on a bombing mission over Dresden, Hamburg, or Tokyo and about to incinerate millions of innocent civilians.

This blatant commercialization of patriotic sentiment, exploitation of Memorial Day, and celebration of the killing instruments of war, demonstrates once again that the primary concern and motivation of banking and corporate executives, the primary sponsors of these spectacles, is profit. Their arrogance, insensitivity, and greed is an outrage to anyone who has proudly worn the uniform, loves America, and who understands and appreciates the nature of sacrifice and service to Country. Most grievously, it is to defile the memory of those young men and women who have lost their lives in war and an insult to their families who will never again caress their son, daughter, husband, or wife . . . and will never recover from their loss.

All Americans, therefore, who honor the memory and the sacrifices of our fallen brothers and sisters must raise their voices in outrage against this exploitation of Memorial Day and demand that these grotesque spectacles and celebrations of military machinery, commercial marketing, and military recruitment be cancelled or rescheduled to another occasion. Perhaps more sensibly, we should end this infatuation with violence and killing, turn these swords into ploughshares, and study and celebrate war no more.

Camillo “Mac” Bica, Ph.D. is a Professor of Philosophy at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, a former Marine Corps Officer, Vietnam Veteran, and the Coordinator of Veterans For Peace Long Island.

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Sunday, May 30, 2010

Jack A. Smith: Terrorism - Causes and Consequences

Terrorism - Causes and Consequences

by Jack A. Smith [article link](#)

May 29, 2010 | Global Research

"Terrorists" and "terrorism" have become Washington's monomania since 9/11, guiding the foreign/military policies of the American superstate and holding its population in thrall.

“The single biggest threat to U.S. security, both short-term, medium-term and long-term,” President Barack Obama said April 11, is the possibility that terrorists might obtain a nuclear weapon. The second biggest threat to world history's mightiest military state, it goes without saying, are terrorists without nuclear weapons but armed with box-cutters, rifles or homemade explosives.

It's "terrorism" 24/7 in the United States — the product of a conscious effort by the Bush Administration to keep the American people in the constant clutches of existential fear, in large part to justify launching endless aggressive wars. Anything goes if the target is said to be "terrorism," as long as the Pentagon's violence takes place in smaller, weaker countries usually populated by non-Europeans.

But does the U.S. government really want to defeat terrorism? This is a serious question. All its major efforts so far have been focused on the effects of terrorism but not on its much more profound causes. In this article we shall discuss the causes, particularly the actions of the U.S. in the Middle East over the decades which contributed significantly to the rise of terror as a weapon.

After almost a decade, the Bush Administration's "War on Terrorism" — at a cost of trillions of dollars, the erosion of a substantial portion of America's civil liberties and its worldwide reputation, and the deaths of over a million foreign civilians — has not succeeded in its stated objectives.

And yet, judging by the Obama Administration's 2011 war budget request, the recently released Quadrennial Defense Report and the Nuclear Posture report, and the widening of the wars, it is clear that President Barack Obama has no intention of deviating significantly from President George W. Bush's unjust and failed policies.

President Obama's troop buildup, implied nuclear threats against Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and his order to the CIA to assassinate an American citizen without a trial are but some of the most recent examples.

All that's really changed in national security strategy from one administration to the other is the name of Bush's "War on Terrorism." The Obama Administration renamed it, in an excess of bureaucratese, an "Overseas Contingency Operation," transforming its title to suggest it was a mere budget item. Not so mere, actually, since the Pentagon's annual war budget has risen 67% since 9/11.

American national security policy since the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center nearly nine years ago has been aimed primarily at defeating a small number of ill-equipped non-state "terrorist" enemies by fielding a large professional army with advanced technology first to Afghanistan, then Iraq and now back to the Afghan theater with tributaries extending into Pakistan, Yemen and to a lesser extent Somalia and the Philippines.

Fewer than 100 al-Qaeda operatives are in Afghanistan against about 94,000 U.S. troops, so far, plus 40,000 NATO soldiers, and about 100,000 mostly higher paid "contractors" performing military duties. There are up to 15,000 part- and full-time irregulars associated with the Afghan Taliban, perhaps fewer. But — even though they are ultra-conservative religious extremists who were oppressive when in power — they are a national force with no designs on the United States, and are not technically terrorists but defenders of their country from foreign invasion. Many Americans don't like to hear that, of course.

The Bush-Obama anti-terrorism policy has two aspects, one public, the other concealed. The public aspect is to "keep America safe" from specifically Arab and more broadly Muslim "terrorists." The concealed aspect is to utilize the 9/11 tragedy to justify the projection of military might to extend U.S. hegemony throughout the oil-rich Middle East, especially the Persian Gulf region, and into geostrategic Central Asia through the occupation of Afghanistan.

We shall here discuss the public aspect, and why it was and continues to be the wrong response to 9/11, beginning with a paragraph from the Sept. 15, 2001, Activist Newsletter:

"Tuesday's deplorable terror attacks did not occur in a political vacuum, despite the mass media's effort to depict the events as simply the product of Middle Eastern 'madmen' with 'no regard for human life' driven by fundamentalist religious beliefs to hate the United States. In reality, Washington's role in the Middle East, which it has dominated since the end of World War II to control the region's vast petroleum resources, must be carefully examined to determine the roots of our present situation.... Many Americans ask, 'Why do they hate us so?' The honest answer to that question points the way toward a solution to the 'terrorism' crisis."

Never once in all these years has the U.S. government acknowledged that its decades of interference in the region were a major factor in the growth of "terrorism," the existence of al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban, and the 9/11 attacks. Washington is hardly unaware of the connection — and indeed of the primacy of its own historic provocation in the region — but in the era of government deception and corporate domination of the mass media, "inconvenient" truths usually remain concealed from the masses of people.

Five Major Decisions

Washington implemented five major decisions during the last 65 years that turned public opinion in the Middle East against the United States and largely generated the conditions that led to the creation of al-Qaeda, jihadist warriors, and suicide bombers. We will describe these causes which ultimately led to the effects called terrorism, then, in part 3, conclude with brief "modest" proposals to rectify the situation.

(1) The first of these decisions took place immediately following the end of World War II in 1945, when the U.S. chose to extend its hegemony throughout the Middle East, and thus prevent its essential wartime ally, the Soviet Union, from gaining a foothold. Washington's goal ever since that time — including the last two decades after the implosion of the socialist camp and the 16 months since Obama took office — has been directed toward establishing dominion over this petroleum-rich region to insure America's global preeminence.

To accomplish this objective, the U.S. made deals with ultra-conservative monarchies in the region, offering them military protection and secure dynastic longevity in return for loyalty and concessions on oil supplies. Royal houses, such as exist in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and elsewhere, could have been swept away decades ago by their own people had they not been in America's protective custody. Washington's prolongation of monarchical rule has been a major impediment to democracy in the region.

When the people prevailed, as in Iran in 1951 after an elected democratic government gained power, nationalized the country's substantial petroleum reserves, and replaced the monarchy with a republic, the U.S. and Britain launched a campaign for bloody regime change that by 1953 crushed democracy and restored the brutal Shah of Iran to power.

Washington also continually interfered with republics, not just monarchies, supporting, protecting and enriching those which destroyed their political left wing and bent the knee to U.S. hegemony, such as Egypt, while subverting those leaning left, as in Iran in the early 1950s, or who simply insisted upon maintaining independence from American domination, such as Syria. This, too, stifled democracy and social progress.

After 65 years of interference, Washington either controls or has considerable influence over virtually all the governments of the Middle East, with the exception of Iran, today's imperial target par excellence. Syria remains in the middle. Turkey, which is sometimes not geographically included in the Middle East, is a member of U.S.-dominated NATO and seeks Washington's support to enter the European Union, but has lately taken two positions totally opposed by the Obama

Administration: It has sharply criticized Israel, which was considered Turkey's ally, over its invasion and imprisonment of Gaza, and this month joined with Brazil in a move calculated to head off harsh sanctions against Iran.

In the process of gaining dominance over most Mideast regimes — the majority of which have remained undemocratic as a consequence — the United States has alienated the masses of people throughout the region.

In response, given that the U.S. has demanded of its Arab protectorates that the political left and progressive secular forces be weakened or crushed in country after country, it has been the Islamic resistance which has filled the vacuum and taken up the national struggle against American domination and undemocratic rule. A relatively small portion of this movement is influenced by extreme fundamentalist ideology, and a still smaller sector have joined the jihad (struggle) initiated by Osama bin-Laden's al-Qaeda.

(2) The second decision that contributed principally to creating Arab and Muslim antipathy toward the U.S. was Washington's total support of Israel to the detriment of the people of Palestine, particularly following the June 1967 war, when Israel invaded and occupied large swaths of Palestinian territory, where it remains today in utter violation of several key international laws.

"In Palestine," according to British writer/filmmaker John Pilger, "the enduring illegal occupation by Israel would have collapsed long ago were it not for U.S. backing. Far from being the terrorists of the world, the Islamic peoples have been its victims.... It is only a few years ago that the Islamic fundamentalist groups, willing to blow themselves up in Israel and New York, were formed, and only after Israel and the U.S. had rejected outright the hope of a Palestinian state, and justice for a people scarred by imperialism."

Today, the Arab world agrees to normalize relations with Israel if the Tel Aviv government allows the establishment of two sovereign states, one being Palestinian. Israel refuses, and not only continues to illegally occupy Palestinian lands but to oppress the masses of people — the most gruesome recent example being the vicious attack on Gaza followed by blockading the territory to deprive its inhabitants of the basic necessities of life.

It is well understood that only U.S. military, economic and political support makes it possible for Israel to continuously subjugate the Palestinians. Israel often claims it is surrounded by "existential" threats of one kind or another, the latest being from Iran, but the only real threat it faces is that of losing Washington's sponsorship, protection and economic support.

(3) The third Washington decision that led to 9/11 — and in this case directly — was to involve the U.S. in the Afghan civil war that erupted in 1978 after the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), backed by the Afghan army and military officers, seized power and began to enact reforms to "bring Afghanistan into the 20th century." The reforms — including substantial freedoms for women — aroused armed opposition from conservative Islamic war lords and fighting groups.

The U.S. began supporting these groups clandestinely in 1979 with great infusions of money and war materials, prompting the USSR to send troops to defend the leftist government. Both al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban developed out of this struggle, receiving American support in the process.

The Soviets were fought to a standstill and withdrew in 1989, but the left wing government managed to hold on until it was brutally crushed in 1992. The civil war then transformed into a war for control of Afghanistan between several of the strongest rebel groups. It lasted four years, and resulted in victory for the ultra-orthodox Taliban in 1996. Al-Qaeda used Afghanistan as one of its bases until the U.S. invasion in October 2001, then fled to western Pakistan. (A 2-part account of "The U.S. in Afghanistan," including "The Origins of a Bad War," were published in the November 5, 2009, issue of the Activist Newsletter, available in the blog archive.)

(4) The fourth U.S. decision that contributed substantially to the unpopularity of the American government was to impose cruel sanctions against the Iraqi people in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War. The war itself, resulting in the mortification of Iraq for occupying Kuwait, was intended to compensate for the Pentagon's humiliating defeat in Vietnam 15 years

earlier. The U.S. launched what has been called one of the "most devastating air assaults in history" against Iraq in mid-January 1991. It was all over in a couple of months. Overwhelming power succeeded: The U.S. lost 147 troops. The Iraqis lost 200,000, troops and civilians in the brief war and its immediate aftermath.

Ultimately up to 1.5 million Iraqis died as a result of a dozen years of draconian U.S./UN economic, trade and materials sanctions that accompanied the war, and which ended only after the U.S. invasion in March 2003. The UN suggests that half these civilian dead were children. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, a defender of the Iraqi people, said of the sanctions, "The goal was to cripple Iraq's infrastructure and make civilian life unsustainable." (His 1992 book, "The Fire This Time — U.S. War Crimes in the Gulf," remains a classic account of the real causes and effects of the Gulf War.)

Most Americans were and remain indifferent to the terrible pain visited upon the Iraqi people by the sanctions. Secretary of State Madeline Albright famously said of the civilian deaths, "we think the price is worth it." To the Arab people, Muslims in general, humanitarians, and anti-imperialists throughout the world, it was a cruel and vindictive act of genocidal proportions.

(5) The fifth decision was to respond to the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the U.S. by bombing and invading Afghanistan, instead of relying on international police work to capture al-Qaeda, a small, non-state, quasi-military organization dedicated to "propaganda of the deed," with cells in several countries in addition to its Afghan component.

Bush's decision to launch a war was precisely what al-Qaeda wanted to further discredit the U.S. in Arab eyes. The Bush Administration's subsequent decision to invade Iraq — which was completely innocent of involvement in 9/11 and extremely weak militarily because of the sanctions — compounded the original miscalculation of invading Afghanistan. Secular President Saddam Hussein was probably fundamentalist al-Qaeda's principal ideological enemy in the Arab world, and Washington ordered his execution. Meanwhile, the Iraqi national resistance forced the world's only military superpower into a humiliating stalemate, another fact about which the U.S. public is blissfully ignorant.

The Iraq war itself, now seven years old, has killed another million Iraqi people and created at least four million refugees. Between the sanctions and the war, the U.S. has killed roughly 2.5 million Iraqis — almost 10% of the population. This does not seem to have penetrated the consciousness, much less the conscience, of the thoroughly propagandized American people. The only winner of Bush's imperialist misadventure in Iraq was neighboring Shi'ite Iran, which had viewed Hussein's Ba'athist Sunni regime as its main enemy.

President Obama's decision to widen the Afghan war and to penetrate Pakistan and Yemen has once again played into al-Qaeda's hands, and continues to increase anti-U.S. views on the part of the Arab masses. The good will Obama generated throughout the Muslim world by his warm, peaceful, convincing and ultimately deceptive words in Cairo a year ago has dissipated. His actions have strengthened the tiny splinter of the Arab and Muslim population attracted to fringe groups that engage in violence, led by al-Qaeda.

Washington Must Reverse Policy

If America's long, unsustainably expensive and essentially stalemated wars are doing little to eliminate the so-called "terrorist" threat, what's the alternative if Washington actually wants to eliminate terrorism?

The answer is to recognize that the history of America's misdeeds in the Middle East is the main reason for the existence of al-Qaeda. Instead of more wars, Washington must reverse its policies:

- * Call off the wars. Pull the troops out. Withdraw the fleet and air bases from the region.

- * Insist upon an equitable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and take measures to enhance Israel's compliance.

- * Stop dominating and manipulating the countries of the Middle East to serve America's interests. Discontinue support for undemocratic governments and monarchies. Apologize for decades of manipulation and violence.

* Pay a huge compensation to the Iraqi people in particular. Invest heavily in eliminating poverty in the entire region and improving social services for the masses of people.

* Allow the Arab people, and the Iranians as well of course, to work out their political, social and cultural contradictions and preferences without interference. The United States is not the divine instrument chosen to redeem the world, and should stop behaving as though it were.

This will end jihadist terrorism. And it can all be paid for with the money Washington saves by ending its wars and subversion in the region.

There is another problem as well, however, more dangerous and widespread than the small-group terrorism of a handful of individuals with homemade weapons. That problem is state terrorism.

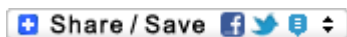
What else other than "state terrorism" can describe Washington's killer sanctions followed by the "shock and awe" bombing, invasion and occupation of Iraq against an essentially defenseless people? What else but state terrorism can we call U.S.-enabled Israel's horrendously disproportionate attack against the civilian population of Gaza, resulting in 1,400 Palestinian deaths and 14 Israeli deaths, followed by strangling sanctions?

At this stage, only the people of the United States have the power to force their government to stop interfering in the Middle East, thus ending the retaliatory threat of terrorism. And only the people have the power to end Washington's ongoing state terrorism against small developing countries in order to enhance its geopolitical fortunes.

So far, the U.S. government, whether controlled by one or the other of the two ruling parties, has hoodwinked most Americans into actively or passively supporting its aggressive wars. This is surprisingly easy to do, not least because most of us Americans suffer not at all due to our country's violent and criminal adventures abroad. It remains the task of those who see through the distortions and propaganda to speak up and take a public stand in opposition. To do less is to be indifferent to, or complicit with, a gross iniquity.

Jack A. Smith is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:30 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Mammon's Instrumentation of Evil

MM Book 1 Chapter 1-3

We have been inured by a concept, a category of thought ... in our pockets is a weapon of war, a weapon of mass destruction, which cumulatively has killed more people, destroyed more lives, has wrought more environmental destruction than any other weapon ever devised by man – it is an ancient weapon, and it claims all: this weapon demands sacrifice [blood and sweat], it demands complete surrender and obedience, it demands "worship" – all life is equated with this weapon, its use *is* the "means" of life [all is acquired by violent use of this weapon]; all blessings and punishments are equated, peace and happiness are equated, status and "worth" for life are equated, mind [very thought] is equated [intellectual "property"], even God is equated with this weapon [the ultimate lie]; we are governed by this weapon, it is held over our heads and to our throats, lest we should think or speak against it – this weapon of war is regarded as a weapon of peace, as the very cure for the disease that "it" actually is – we [all of us], by *use* of this weapon *become* the enemy, our enemy, and by its use we are committing collective suicide; **this weapon is an instrumentation of evil, and we personify evil by its use** – this weapon is known by all, sought by all, and excused by all; all is done in its name and service: THIS WEAPON [OF EVIL] IS MONEY*, AND OUR USE OF IT !! – this weapon *is* absolute [idol] power and author-ity and conveys such to those who wield and control it !! *[as corporate debt-instrument]

MM Book 1 Chapter 1-4

There are writings thousands of years old warning about this weapon and its use; **God's Word explains for us two "ways of life": a "society of the gift" [giving life (God) to us], or a "society of the take" [taking life from us];** all prophecy, as determinant [not prediction], lays out the choice for us [the blessings and cursings], and gives us the example of our ancestors [Israel], those chosen [small in number and in slavery] and called out of the world's systemic, to create the alternative, by introducing God to the world, and applying Him in the world, yet the Bible relates the story of Israel's failure, and the story remains the same today [physically and spiritually] !! – MAMMON [the "business" of] *or* MESSIAH continues as our choice !! – the equating of Mammon with Messiah is our present state of being: BABYLON [confusion by mixing (God is not the author(-ity) of confusion)], where money [corporatized as weapon] is *equated* with life !! – to give consideration or regard to its use, to be a friend or an associate [support and maintenance] of it, IS THE ROOT [cause] OF ALL EVIL !! – **the corporate nation, society and church are wholly opposed to our God(-ing), and must be *withdrawn* from [Moses], we must *return* to our God [Elijah] !!** – we must have a clean heart and washed hands [innocency]; we must behave wisely and in a perfect way; we must despise [hate] the evil [work] !! – we must recognize God as [our] enabler !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 1-5

The corporate, as "definition of life", must be rejected in total: GOD *IS* LIFE !! – OUR "SYSTEMIC MIND" MUST BE OF GOD !! – we must "exult" God [prepare the paths; remove the stumbling-blocks]; God has been made irrelevant – Hab. 3:17 systemic failure looming: our selfish mass coveting results in privation for all !! – **the whole concept of "money" as we know it [mind it], is a contagion, DEEP SPIRITUAL ILLNESS !!** – selfishness knows no bounds, it is a cancer, consuming all !! – the whole "business" concept of life [as means, as prejudiced claim (Nation-State, society, privilege, etc.), the adversarial competition] must be absolutely rejected, it is anti-God !! – each one of us is responsible for all aspects of our society, the privileged, monied pride, and the abject poverty [physically/spiritually]; it is easy to forsake others when our own human-ity [sodality (our fellowship, brotherhood)] has been abandoned – the specter [object of fear, of dread] of business [as mind] is God(-ing): all iniquity *purged* by mercy and truth !! — the physical is a reflection of the spiritual, and our society fits the definition: monied privilege [in the physical; supported by massive debt of claim] existing in abject poverty [spiritually; including the COG Inc., Laodicean spiritual condition]; the debt burden oppresses and controls most; all claim and its social resultant "poverty" [the commodification of life] is a result of our collective spiritual poverty, our lack of God !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 1 [web page](#) (widescreen)

MM Book 1 [blog home](#)

Previously Posted on March 10, 2010



Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:26 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

[Mark Karlin: Protest Big Oil and Get Arrested](#)

Protest Big Oil and Get Arrested;

BP Pollutes the Earth with 100s of Millions of Gallons of Oil and It's Just a Statistic

by Mark Karlin [article link](#) [article link](#)

05/29/2010 | BUZZFLASH EditorBlog | OpEdNews

I read with growing outrage that several [Greenpeace](#) protesters were arrested the other day in Louisiana. What was their crime? They painted an anti-offshore drilling message on the side of an oil exploration ship. The parish sheriff threw the book at them, charging them with crimes that could net them 7 years in jail. To compound the injustice, a parish officer said that they might be charged as terrorists.

Meanwhile, the CEO of BP is treated as a privileged member of the wealthy ruling elite as he chronically lies about his company's latest act of crime against the earth and its inhabitants, as well as other living creatures of the sea and planet. But whether it's BP, Wall Street, or Wal-Mart, global corporations know that crimes committed on a massive scale don't get prosecuted; they are just a statistic that goes unchallenged by the paid-off elected officials and regulators in D.C.

And although the lack of regulation of corporate America is largely born of Republican ideology, the Democrats have generally gone along for the ride, as they did in the Clinton Administration.

As for President Obama, he seems to have reversed the famous Theodore Roosevelt slogan and morphed it into a new White House attitude: "Speak loudly and carry a little stick."

Actually, Obama has a great deal lacking in the Roosevelt department, both FDR and Teddy. It was Theodore Roosevelt who became a renegade statesman and declared:

"Political parties exist to secure responsible government and to execute the will of the people. From these great tasks both of the old parties have turned aside. Instead of instruments to promote the general welfare they have become the tools of corrupt interests, which use them impartially to serve their selfish purposes. Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people. To destroy this invisible government, to dissolve the unholy alliance between corrupt business and corrupt politics, is the first task of the statesmanship of the day."

We have evolved into an oligarchy that considers cost savings and profit ahead of lives and the preservation of our earth. There is no accountability; just grim statistics and gluttonous predatory profiteers who continue to fatten themselves on the misfortunes that they visit upon the rest of us.

And the Obama Administration, as it did with Wall Street, lets the destroyers be "responsible" for mucking up even further what they've already decimated of the public commons and the assets and property that belong to the citizens of America.

Protest for the common good, for what is ours by the laws of nature and the Constitution, and you could be charged as a terrorist. Wreak damage of incalculable proportions and you get rewarded; what you have knowingly destroyed with negligence and criminal forethought in order to achieve a higher profit is just a statistic to the powers that be in Washington.

President Obama says the "buck stops here." But he seems a bystander aiding and abetting BP in their ruinous rampage that comes off like the Three Stooges, only the earth and lives are at stake.

How many died in the explosion of the Gulf rig?

How many more will have to die, how much more of our earth will be polluted before the CEOs who are responsible for such "statistics" are brought to justice.

Could a terrorist do more harm than BP has done?

MARK KARLIN FOR BUZZFLASH, EDITOR'S BLOG

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John Vidal: The Real Cost of Cheap Oil

The Real Cost of Cheap Oil

The Gulf disaster is only unusual for being so near the US. Elsewhere, Big Oil rarely cleans up its mess

by John Vidal [article link](#) [article link](#)

May 28, 2010 | Guardian/UK | CommonDreams

Big Oil is holding its breath. BP's shares are in steep decline after [the debacle in the Gulf of Mexico](#). Barack Obama, the American people and the global environmental community are outraged, and now the company stands to lose the rights to drill for oil in the Arctic and other ecologically sensitive places.

The gulf disaster may cost it a few billion dollars, but so what? When annual profits for a company often run to tens of billions, the cost of laying 5,000 miles of booms, or spraying millions of gallons of dispersants and settling 100,000 court cases is not much more than missing a few months' production. It's awkward, but it can easily be passed on.

The oil industry's image is seriously damaged, but it can pay handsomely to greenwash itself, just as it managed after [Exxon Valdez](#), Brent Spar and the [Ken Saro-Wiwa](#) public relations disasters. In a few years' time, this episode will probably be forgotten - just another blip in the fortunes of the industry that fuels the world. But the oil companies are nervous now because the spotlight has been turned on their cavalier attitude to pollution and on the sheer incompetence of an industry that is used to calling the shots.

Big Oil's real horror was not the spillage, which was common enough, but because it happened so close to the US. Millions of barrels of oil are spilled, jettisoned or wasted every year without much attention being paid.

If this accident had occurred in a developing country, say off the west coast of Africa or Indonesia, BP could probably have avoided all publicity and escaped starting a clean-up for many months. It would not have had to employ booms or dispersants, and it could have ignored the health effects on people and the damage done to fishing. It might have eventually been taken to court and could have been fined a few million dollars, but it would probably have appealed and delayed a court decision for a decade or more.

Big Oil is usually a poor country's most powerful industry, and is generally allowed to act like a parallel government. In many countries it simply pays off the judges, the community leaders, the lawmakers and the ministers, and it expects environmentalists and local people to be powerless. Mostly it gets away with it.

What the industry dreads more than anything else is being made fully accountable to developing countries for the mess it has made and the oil it has spilt in the forests, creeks, seas and deserts of the world.

There are more than 2,000 major spillage sites in the Niger delta that have never been cleaned up; there are vast areas of the Colombian, Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazon that have been devastated by spillages, the dumping of toxic materials and blowouts. Rivers and wells in Venezuela, Angola, Chad, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Uganda and Sudan have been badly polluted. Occidental, BP, Chevron, Shell and most other oil companies together face hundreds of outstanding lawsuits. Ecuador alone is seeking \$30bn from Texaco.

The only reason oil costs \$70-\$100 a barrel today, and not \$200, is because the industry has managed to pass on the real costs of extracting the oil. If the developing world applied the same pressure on the companies as Obama and the US senators are now doing, and if the industry were forced to really clean up the myriad messes it causes, the price would jump and the switch to clean energy would be swift.

If the billions of dollars of annual subsidies and the many tax breaks the industry gets were withdrawn, and the cost of protecting oil companies in developing countries were added, then most of the world's oil would almost certainly be left in the ground.

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Ten Things You Need (But Don't Want) To Know About the BP Oil Spill

by Daniela Perdomo [article link](#)
May 29, 2010 | Global Research
Global Research [home page](#)

BP Oil Spill Confirmed as Worst in US History

By Amy Goodman [article link](#) [article link](#)
May 28, 2010 | Democracy Now! | AlterNet
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The Oil Catastrophe

By Michael T. Klare [article link](#) [article link](#)
MAY 28, 2010 | The Nation | ICH
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Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:09 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Saturday, May 29, 2010

Shamus Cooke: The European and U.S. Economies: Falling Dominoes

The European and U.S. Economies: Falling Dominoes

By Shamus Cooke [article link](#)
May 29, 2010 | OpEdNews

Attempting to fix an unfixable problem can create new problems. Why is the global economy unfixable in the current context? For one, the cause of the depression is never mentioned in the mainstream media or politicians. And when a disease is misdiagnosed, a prescribed medication creates new afflictions.

Massive, bad debt is often cited as the cause of the global depression, but why this debt existed in the first place is never discussed. Quite simply, the debt was needed to buy the products of corporations that wages once consumed. Over time, corporations drove down wages to out-compete each other while driving up profits, creating the global "demand" for credit, which the banks are now demanding be paid back.

Unraveling the global trillions of dollars of bad debt must take the whole system down with it; no amount of "stimulus" will do the trick. Tinkering with the money supply is no fix either. Mountains of fake wealth (debt) need to be destroyed, taking real wealth down with it, since products (real wealth) were being produced with the idea that the fake wealth would gobble it up.

As wealth -- both real and imaginary -- is destroyed, a battle is being waged as to "whose" wealth will be eliminated as a result: that of the corporate-elite or the rest of us.

This fight is apparent for anyone reading the news of any national paper, anywhere. Bank bailouts are the most blatant example: bank shareholders receive taxpayer money to compensate for their destroyed wealth (bad loans).

The European Union's giant bailout package is such an example. The European bankers and corporate-elite in general will have their billions in bad loans repaid by governments. Meanwhile the taxpaying workers of Greece, Spain, Ireland, Italy, etc., are having their wages reduced, their pensions slashed, their retirement age raised, all to pay for a crisis they did not cause.

It is unknown if Europe can punish its workforce enough to push profits back up to competitive levels; there is a long and turmoil-filled road ahead.

The corporate-elite of the U.S. is watching closely, since they'll have to eventually fight a similar brawl with their working class.

Not a day goes by without some politician or corporate-media hack talking about U.S. workers needing to payback the national debt, accumulated through bank bailouts, multiple wars, and years of receding taxes for the rich.

To pay for these corporate policies, U.S. workers are being told that Social Security and Medicare will need to be reduced, as will social services and public education. This policy is already underway on a state-by-state level, and wages for all public workers are already under attack as a result. Obama's Race to the Top education policy is decimating the public school system nationally.

The situation can be expected to worsen. Much of the U.S. "recovery" was predicated on increasing exports (Obama's goal was to increase exports five fold).

Europe's collapse will keep the U.S. export business in a coma, since the Euro is plummeting -- closing off U.S. exports -- while global investors stick with the dollar, boosting its price and thus hurting U.S. corporate exports by making them more expensive. China will not re-evaluate its currency in this climate.

Now U.S. government and corporate officials are lecturing the Europeans on how to conduct economic policy, when only months ago the tables were turned. In reality, the downturn will be protracted, spreading to different areas of the global economy at different times, since both the U.S. and Europe were long-term players in the corporate globalization game that turned millionaires into billionaires.

There are still many bad loans that will require reconciliation, and workers will be asked to do the "sacrificing." The delicacy of the situation is described in a recent article of the corporate Washington Post, titled One False Move in Europe Could Set Off a Global Chain Reaction. The article states:

"If one or more [European nations] fail to make the expected progress on cutting budgets, [cutting wages, pensions, etc.] restructuring economies or boosting growth, it could drain confidence in a broad and unsettling way. Credit markets worldwide could lock up and throw the global economy back into recession." (May 24, 2010).

Ultimately, global "investors," i.e. capitalists, will force governments everywhere to protect their unearned money by destroying the miniscule wealth of the European and U.S. working class. Workers everywhere must demand that the corporate-elite pay for the crisis they created. An international slogan is already making its appearance: Tax the Rich and Corporations!

Shamus Cooke is a social service worker, trade unionist, and writer for Workers Action (www.workerscompass.org). He can be reached at shamuscooke@gmail.com

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CADTM: La Marlagne Declaration

Eurozone Economic Crisis:

Call For a European Mobilisation Against the Dictatorship of the Creditors

Text of the La Marlagne Declaration

by Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt [article link](#) [article link](#)

May 28, 2010 | Global Research | CADTM

Protests have been taking place regularly for months in Greece to express opposition to the austerity plan the Greek government, European leaders, and the International Monetary Fund decided to impose on the Greek people. Today, the leadership of this country is no longer in the hands of its elected officials, but has been placed under the authority of the IMF and European institutions, which means an absence of any democratic control.

Several general strikes have already taken place since the beginning of 2010 in response to a call from all the unions and left-wing political parties.

The exemplary Greek struggle echoes what happened in Eastern Europe in Romania, Hungary, and Latvia, and in other Balkan countries such as Bosnia, or in Ireland and more recently Iceland, which have all faced similar austerity plans.

The peoples from all European countries have been, are, or will be concerned by these attacks, which want to make wage earners, retired people, and the unemployed pay for the effects of a profound crisis for which they are in no way responsible.

It is indeed the ‘financial markets’ (the banks, insurance companies, and pension funds) that are responsible for this financial crisis, which they created through their speculative activities in the interest of shareholders and the independently wealthy, and which have decided to take the public debt of European countries as their target.

What are the origins of this public debt?

It is principally the fruit of fiscal policies in favor of the wealthiest individuals and the major corporations. The drop in tax revenues brought about by the gift to the wealthy has led governments worldwide to finance a growing part of their national budgets through loans. The recent economic slowdown has brought about another decrease in tax revenues. Finally, bank bailout plans have further worsened public deficits, yet public authorities have failed to act decisively to take back control of the financial sector so as to change the practices there.

What has it financed?

National public debt has not been used to finance job creation, or improvements to public services and infrastructure. It has only been used to salvage the investments of the guilty parties and to make up for the budget deficits resulting from their irresponsible behavior.

Who is profiting from it?

The people and institutions that have already benefitted from tax decreases: the wealthiest households, banks, and major corporations, which at the same time have been speculating on public debt and pocketing the interest coming from National bonds. So it's a double reward for the culprits.

Who is going to pay?

The same people, who are punished twice: The poor, and the men and women who work to simply survive, are once again being squeezed in order to save the very people who are earning money from public debt, with:

* A drop in salaries and retirement benefits,

- * The destruction of the social protection system,
- * The elimination of public services,
- * The undermining of labor laws,
- * An increase in taxes on every day purchases, via VAT.

These austerity plans will not solve anything in terms of the real causes of this crisis, and they are also going to plunge millions of human beings into misery and precariousness.

The European CADTM network is calling on all political, union and association forces, at the national and European levels, to organize the mobilizations needed to oppose these premeditated attacks against the peoples of Europe.

We must refuse to pay for their crisis, and prepare a massive social movement against public debt and the causes of this crisis!

Instead of implementing these austerity plans, we must attack the root of the problem:

- * By expropriating the banks to transfer them to the public sector and under citizen control.
- * By adopting a unilateral moratorium (with no accumulation of interest) on debt reimbursement for the time required to make an audit of public loans (with citizen participation). On the basis of the results of the audit, any illegitimate debt will be cancelled.
- * By putting into place real fiscal justice and a fair redistribution of wealth.
- * By fighting against the massive fiscal fraud committed by major corporations and the wealthiest individuals.
- * By putting the financial markets under control by creating a directory of stock owners and forbidding short sales.
- * By drastically decreasing the work week to create jobs while maintaining the same levels of salaries and retirement benefits.
- * By re-socializing many corporations and services that were privatized in the last 30 years.

We must create a massive popular mobilization extending beyond national borders, because our local struggles must converge at the international level to put an end to socially regressive policies.

Adopted in La Marlagne (Namur, Belgium) on 24 May 2010, at the international seminar “From the North to the South of our Planet: Keys for Understanding Public Debt”

Translated by Charles La Via

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:40 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Joe Costello: Are We Going the Way of the Roman Republic?

Are We Going the Way of the Roman Republic?

by Joe Costello [article link](#)

05/27/2010 | new deal 2.0

With rampant corruption and elitism, America could be following the path of the Roman Republic.

“But, as statesmen, even these better aristocrats were not much less remiss and shortsighted than the average senators of the time. In presence of an outward foe the more eminent among them, doubtless, proved themselves useful and brave; but no one of them evinced the desire or the skill to solve the problems of politics proper, and to guide the vessel of the state through the stormy sea of intrigues and factions as a true pilot. Their political wisdom was limited to a sincere belief in the oligarchy as the sole means of salvation, and to a cordial hatred and courageous execration of demagogism as well as of every individual authority which sought to emancipate itself. Their petty ambition was contented with little.”

– [Theodor Mommsen](#), History of Rome — the quote describes the political class of the Roman Republic’s last decades.

A century ago, Theodor Mommsen was globally renown for [his history of the Roman Republic](#). For some reason, the book went out of print around WWII and never came back. Which is unfortunate, for Mommsen’s chronicles of the last decades of the republic are extremely relevant history for contemporary Americans. Remember, the Roman republic flourished from 500 BC to 50 BC, when it fell at the hands of Caesar. Of course today, if ever an American thinks of Rome, they undoubtedly think of Imperial Rome, the age of the emperors and its inglorious fall chronicled by [Gibbon](#). Yet, Gibbon’s history begins where Mommsen’s ends. The fall of the Roman Republic was well known to America’s founders and its lessons well contemplated, for unlike Imperial Rome, the Republic fell at the height of its economic and military power. By the end, Rome’s politics were eminently corrupt and the weight of the empire that was conquered collapsed the unique system of self-government that had been created.

With most recent examples of the health care bill, the financial industry bill, the continued electoral buying and selling of our elected officials, and the growing ineptitude and corruption of our government agencies ([the most recently reported in the MMS](#)) who are responsible for regulation of the oil industry, it is obvious for all who care to look, we are on the same path of the Roman republic. And just as Rome, our political class’ petty ambition is content with little. Mommsen wrote history’s cold verdict on the republic’s fall:

“But, when a government cannot govern, it ceases to be legitimate, and whoever has the power has also the right to overthrow it. It is, no doubt, unhappily true that an incapable and flagitious government may for a long period trample under foot the welfare and honor of the land, before the men are found who are able and willing to wield against that government the formidable weapons of its own forging, and to evoke out of the moral revolt of the good and the distress of the many the revolution which is in such a case legitimate. But if the game attempted with the fortunes of nations may be a merry one and may be played perhaps for a long time without molestation, it is a treacherous game, which in its own time entraps the players; and no one then blames the axe, if it is laid to the root of the tree that bears such fruits. For the Roman oligarchy the time had now come.”

In his last years, Mommsen gave a series of lectures on Rome’s early emperors. When asked why he didn’t put them together in a book, he declared, “It’s too depressing.” The Roman republic’s decline took course over seven decades, from the [Gracchi](#), maybe the republic’s last true reformers, to Caesar. The real question for us is, unlike the Romans, will we stand up and reform our unique system of self-government that has provided so much to us all? Or as Rome, will we simply succumb to a neo-Caesar? I’ve come to empathize a great deal more with the Republic’s last great defender, Cicero. I used to consider him completely politically inept, but over the years, through experience, I have developed a much greater sympathy for the environment in which he toiled. Cicero wrote,

“Long before our time the customs of our ancestors molded admirable men, in turn these men upheld the ways and institutions of their forebears. Our age, however, inherited the Republic as if it were some beautiful painting of bygone

ages, its colors already fading through great antiquity; and not only has our time neglected to freshen the colors of the picture, but we have failed to preserve its forms and outlines.”

[Joe Costello](#) was communications director for Jerry Brown’s 1992 presidential campaign and was a senior adviser for Howard Dean’s effort in 2004.

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Saturday, May 29, 2010

[Damon Vrabel: Central Banking vs. The Republic and the World](#)

Central Banking vs. The Republic and the World

By Damon Vrabel [article link](#)

May 28, 2010 | Canada Free Press

A couple of days ago in Japan, Ben Bernanke said that the benefits of low interest rate policies that politicians want “are not sustainable and will soon evaporate, leaving behind inflationary pressures that worsen the economy’s long-term prospects.....thus political interference in monetary policy can generate undesirable boom-bust cycles that ultimately lead to both a less stable economy and higher inflation.”

[pause inserted so you have time to pick your jaw up off the floor]

We are now in the midst of one of the biggest boom-busts in history, all under the Fed’s watch, caused by its multi-decade low interest rate policy among other things, yet that is the scenario he says government oversight would cause! So what’s really going on here beneath Ben’s Harvard veneer?

He is trying to scare us with a fabricated boogie man—the idea that your elected leaders might do in some imaginary future what the Fed has already done in the unimaginable present. He wants you to be scared of this republic’s legislature reclaiming some power back from the financial empire that runs the global corporate system, and the US government from behind closed doors (article: [Wall Street Empire](#)). In other words, he wants you to continue submitting to financial dictatorship rather than rediscovering the principles of freedom, distributed power, and effective government. Will you choose submission or discovery? As more and more people are realizing, we are now in one of the most critical moments “in the course of human events.”

We have seen this moment before, especially from Hollywood. It is the WALL-E moment when the captain of the starship Axiom (our elected leaders) finally wrestles power back from Auto (the Fed cartel on Wall Street) and restores life by saving humanity from its TV programming (our media). It is the Gladiator moment when General Maximus wakes up to the imperial enemy and commits himself to restoring the republic. It is the Star Wars moment when Darth Vader chooses

life for his son and the republic by throwing the emperor to his death. Which will you choose? Will real life turn out as well as fiction? Or will Ben's scare tactics keep you in fear?

The Ben Bernanke Survey

I'm curious for your opinion about why Ben is doing this. Reply in the comments below with your answer to this multiple choice question: Who is Ben Bernanke?

* Honest – he actually believes what he says. He's still a Harvard kid getting gold stars on his homework as he repeats the fraudulent load of crap known as neoclassical economics.

* Dishonest – he knows he's just protecting the powers behind the Fed system and furthering their global restructuring plan by threatening the politicians with more boom-busts if they try to serve the people.

* Insane – he's not in touch with reality.

Folks like Jim Rogers, Marc Faber, and Peter Schiff promote #1, the idea that he's a clueless theoretician repeatedly making mistakes. No doubt there was a time when he was just a bright-eyed overachiever being pumped full of theory disconnected from reality. But these guys ignore Ben's comments in Japan. He makes it clear that he knows exaggerated low interest rate policies cause major problems, i.e. he's not ignorant, but he engages in them anyway! So again I ask what's really going on?

Feel free to disagree, but #2 is my answer, which means we need to stop believing Rogers, Faber, and Schiff that he's a pedantic bureaucrat. That's pure spin that reinforces the idea there's no strategic plan behind what the G20, IMF, BIS, and Fed are doing in response to the coordinated actions of Rubin, Summers, Paulson, Geithner, Greenspan, AIG, JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, etc. Those who promote #1 are suggesting that these folks, all part of the elite Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), are basically randomly screwing up a kids' game of checkers. No chance. The fact is we are in the midst of a global chess game being played above the heads of national governments in which debt and leverage are used to restructure the world under a new global money and banking system (video: [Emerging Global Empire](#)). I suggest Bernanke's sole purpose is to hide the real role the Federal Reserve has played in this game while also helping to keep Congress from asserting its power.

Central Banking: Pro or Con?

The media likes to claim that voicing opposition to the Fed is lower class populism. But of course the media doesn't think. It just promotes left or right groupthink for the few corporate powers that own the media. They don't want you thinking about the question of a central bank. If they did, we might better understand the pros and cons.

The pro is that without a central body regulating the value of currency, thousands of banks across the country would be randomly cranking credit up and down resulting in economic turmoil. True. Some of the founders understood that without a controlled currency, private banking institutions could profit massively off whipsawing the people, which is why Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution says the government should regulate the value of the currency. But of course we know this pro doesn't apply to the Fed structure because the most extreme periods of economic turmoil have happened since it was created.

The problem with this pro is the first con of the Fed's form of central banking—it puts currency control in private hands. Rather than the Fed having power over the banks, its structure actually gives the primary dealer banks (mega firms like JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, and many foreign banks) significant power to tell it what to do. Entrenched powers behind these firms working together in cartel groups like the New York Fed and CFR have far more leverage than the president, i.e. an individual with no financial experience who rotates into office for a short period of time completely surrounded by bankers and their allies. The entire purpose of the Constitution and having a republic, despite its flaws, was to put power in the hands of the public vs. a concentrated private oligarchy. But the Fed system creates such an oligarchy, as many Americans now see since the crash of 2008.

Mathematical con: Basing a currency on nothing but interest-bearing debt as the Fed system does creates the need for perpetual exponential growth (video: [Culture of Empire part 1](#)). This feels like a good thing at first, but eventually the accompanying perpetual inflation becomes clear (Bernanke admitted this in Japan by also saying central banks target 2% inflation—a huge indicator economists ignore that the system is unsustainable—a stable system would target zero). The perpetually increasing debt eventually becomes shocking (look around the world). The perpetually increasing scale and velocity of the system starts causing profound harm (Part [2](#) and [3](#)). Exponential systems are guaranteed to crash. The eventual reckoning with the impossibility of exponential math is not pretty, and we are now entering the reckoning phase for our system (Chris Martenson video on [Exponential Growth](#)).

Economic con: Oligarchic monetary systems tend toward a 2-tiered society, money pushing rulers vs. money using servants who scramble to pay the rulers back plus interest. The ruling financial class eventually takes over the productive economy and then parasitically destroys the host upon which it lives as gambling and speculation replace savings and production as the engine of growth. Such is the power of a monetary system based on nothing but debt ([Michael Hudson video](#)).

Moral con: A debt-based monetary system enshrines usury, i.e. living off the backs of others by doing nothing but subjugating a population to systemic interest-bearing debt. So the foundation of our monetary system under the Federal Reserve is built upon immorality (article: [Usury and the Coming Crash](#)).

Philosophical con: Related to the moral and economic cons is the philosophical ideal of freedom. An oligarchic monetary system forces the great mass of the population into servitude. It effectively creates a predator/prey structure in society. In a system based purely on debt, the banking powers are able to super-inflate the system to drive up asset prices, and then deflate the system sucking value and assets up the pyramid to consolidate power. We saw this over the last 10 years. This is the biggest and brightest example of why Jefferson said “banking institutions are more dangerous than standing armies.” It’s also the best example of why the Constitution demands that government regulate the currency.

Solution

So how can we get the one pro of a central monetary authority regulating the value of the currency without any of the cons above? Do precisely what Ben says we shouldn’t do—reestablish the republic by putting currency regulation in the hands of public officials as the Constitution says. If a country doesn’t have a sovereign currency, it doesn’t have a sovereign government. We are learning that painful lesson now as we see Greece being attacked and taken over by financial institutions. The same thing has happened to many countries in the past and it will happen in the future if governments don’t take charge. At that point everyone will know the truth—governments are held hostage by private financial interests. But more and more Americans are realizing the truth now and pushing for change.

However, the change is not as simple as ending the Fed. Without a transition plan, that would cause a disaster since it is the basis for the money supply. The key is to nationalize the Fed, and possibly its primary dealers during the transition phase, to keep them from holding us hostage with the threat of collapse. Then with honest public officials in Treasury and other agencies that don’t represent Goldman Sachs and the rest of the financial cartel—people like William Black, Brooksley Born, Janet Tavakoli, Michael Hudson, Eliot Spitzer, Harry Markopolos—it will be possible to restructure the monetary system. Other components of the solution involve the US Treasury printing sovereign US notes, state banking systems like North Dakota to restore state power, etc. (see details at [Freedom’s Vision](#))

Just a short time ago things felt hopeless because, as Martin Luther King warned, “One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change.” But the republic has heeded his call. It is awakening. Restoration is on the horizon, and that’s a good thing for America and the rest of the world.

Canada Free Press [Articles](#) by Damon Vrabel
Canada Free Press [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [9:09 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, May 28, 2010

Dean Baker: The Cult of Subprime Central Bankers

Ordinary Workers Would Be Fired in a Second If They Screwed Up Anywhere Nearly as Bad as the Bankers Have

By Dean Baker [article link](#) [article link](#) [article link](#)

May 28, 2010 | AlterNet | ICH | Huffington Post

The world is suffering from the worst downturn since the Great Depression. The crisis has left tens of millions unemployed in the U.S., Europe, and elsewhere. The huge baby boomer generation in the United States, now on the edge of retirement, has seen much of its wealth destroyed with the collapse of the housing bubble.

It would be difficult to imagine a worse economic disaster. Prior periods of bad performance, like the inflation ridden seventies, look like mild flurries compared to the blizzard of bad economic news in which we are now enmeshed.

None of this is new. People don't need economists to tell them that times are bad. However, what the public may not recognize is that the same people who caused this disaster are still calling the shots. Specifically, there has been little change in personnel and no acknowledgment of error at the central banks whose incompetence was responsible for the crisis.

Remarkably, this crew of incompetents is still claiming papal infallibility, warning governments and the general public that bad things will happen if they are subjected to more oversight. Instead, the central bankers and their accomplices at the IMF are dictating policies to democratically elected governments. Their agenda seems to be the same everywhere, cut back retirement benefits, reduce public support for health care, weaken unions and make ordinary workers take pay cuts.

Given how much they have messed up, it is amazing that these central bankers have the gall to even show their face in public. They are lucky that they still have jobs -- and very good paying ones at that. (Many of the boys and girls at the IMF can retire with six figure pensions at the age of 50.) Ordinary workers, like teachers, autoworkers, or custodians, would be fired in a second if they performed as badly as the world's central bankers.

What was going through their heads when they saw house prices in the United States, the UK, Spain and elsewhere spiral upward with no basis in any of the fundamentals of the housing market? How did they think this bubble would end; did they think that trillions of dollars of housing bubble wealth could just disappear without any impact on the economy. Or, did they think the bubble would never end and that house prices would just continue to go skyward forever?

How about the central bankers who allowed the euro to be imposed on a mix of economies with very little in common and no controlling governmental organization? Did they think that wages and prices would follow the same pattern in Greece and Germany? If not, what adjustment mechanism did they envision once these widely different economies were tied to together in a single currency?

Yes, many of the central bankers are now saying that they knew the euro was a bad idea back when it was established. Some of them even muttered quietly to this effect. But the central bankers and the IMF in 1998 were not making the same bold pronouncements and issuing the same directives to elected governments about structuring the euro zone that they are now doing in telling them to dismantle their welfare states. In other words, these central bankers failed disastrously -- why do they still have jobs and why on earth is anyone listening to them?

At the top of the list of villains in this story is the IMF. Its ineptitude managed to reverse the fundamental flows of capital in the world economy. In normal times capital is supposed to flow from wealthy countries with large amounts of capital, like the United States and the European countries, to the developing countries who need capital to fuel their development. Due to the failure of the IMF to establish a workable system of international finance, the flows went in the opposite direction in a huge way. The world's poor were [sending their capital to the United States](#) because the IMF gave them little choice.

It is important to be clear about the responsibility of the central bankers and the IMF for this totally preventable disaster. The first reason is accountability, something that is very important to economists who believe in economics. Economic theory teaches us that if workers are not held accountable for poor work, then they have no incentive to do their jobs well. If the central banker and IMF crew can mess up disastrously and continue to draw their paychecks as though everything is fine, what is their incentive to do better next time?

The other reason why it is important to recognize the responsibility of the central bankers and the IMF for this disaster is so that we don't continue to take advice from people who apparently don't have a clue. Before anyone listens to Ben Bernanke, European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet, or IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn, they should first be forced to tell us when they stopped being wrong about the economy. We cannot afford to let these subprime central bankers control economic policy any longer.

Dean Baker is co-director of the [Center for Economic and Policy Research](#) and author of the new book, [False Profits: Recovering from the Bubble Economy](#) (PoliPointPress, 2010).

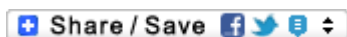
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[**The Daily Bell: Euro Crisis to Set One World Currency?**](#)

The Daily Bell | News & Analysis

Euro Crisis to Set One World Currency?

by Staff Report [article link](#)

May 28, 2010 | The Daily Bell

Is Europe heading for a meltdown? ... This financial crisis is worse than the sub-prime crash of 2008 because the sums are so much bigger and it is governments that are in dire straits. Edmund Conway explains the dangers. Mervyn King, the Bank of England Governor, summed it up best: "Dealing with a banking crisis was difficult enough," he said the other week, "but at least there were public-sector balance sheets on to which the problems could be moved. Once you move into sovereign debt, there is no answer; there's no backstop." In other words, were this a computer game, the politicians would be down to their last life. Any mistake now and it really is Game Over. Or to pick a slightly more traditional game, it is rather like a session of pass-the-parcel which is fast approaching the end of the line. – UK Telegraph

Dominant Social Theme: The wise men of Brussels and the courageous citizens of the EU will muddle through.

Free-Market Analysis: As the money crisis seems to grow worse in Europe, we have begun to wonder if there are parallels to the 1907 financial panic in the United States that gave rise to the Federal Reserve. The [dominant social theme](#) way back then (assuming an active [power elite](#), and we do) was along the lines of "The US banking system is too fragmented and a lender of last resort is badly needed." JP Morgan assembled his rich friends in the library of his exquisite New York mansion and bailed out the market, but only six years later, the Federal Reserve was born, the bastard child of false market-insolvency rumors and a knobby-nosed father (Morgan, himself).

There is, in fact, still speculation today that Morgan's camp planted the initial rumors of instability that swept the market and triggered the crash of 1907. Why on earth would he do such a thing? To generate the eventual result: the creation of the Federal Reserve and its passage by the US Congress. This is one perspective, anyway, the "paranoid one" that you will not find in most mainstream history books or college texts.

Back to our larger theme. We have written in the past (see – [IMF Plotting Gold Backed SDRs](#)) that we did not see how on earth the power elite was going to get from fairly abstract monetary concepts like SDRs to an actual worldwide consensus for a more globalized currency (and a global warming – "carbon" – currency seems, as well, to be a non-starter, at least currently). In fact, we have speculated that the elite could decide on a gradualist approach, setting up a thesis/antithesis dialectic between global money and regional money to move the conversation gradually in the direction of a worldwide currency. But perhaps there is a faster way. Let us see ...

The European financial crisis started with Greece and, it's true, Greece's problems are moderate ones for the EU given its size and amount of debt. But this crisis has not been resolved despite the supposed US\$1 trillion that has been set aside to discourage "wrong way" speculation in Greek debt. We saw yesterday that the larger market was up because of statements from Chinese leaders that they were not going to sell euros and were perhaps to continue to be a net purchaser. So this is what market confidence has come to: China, a rigid, neo-communist state with a raging property inflation problem is seen by "the market" as a lynchpin of the Western capitalist system. What a hoot. You can't make this stuff up.

Anyway, from our perspective, a hypothetical path to a world currency (with some speed) would involve certain very specific elements. It would include, obviously, a very serious sovereign wealth crisis spreading from country to country throughout at least the Southern half of Europe. This crisis, hypothetically, would be averted by heroic Brussels bureaucrats but not before a significant amount of financial pain was inflicted – good and hard as H. L. Mencken might say. It might even involve the dissolution of the euro and the shrinking of the EU itself. But the pay-off for the power elite would be the ability to float a scenario that proposes a worldwide currency to avert additional difficulties going forward. Here's some more from the article excerpted above:

Strip away the details – the breakdown of the euro, the crumbling of the Spanish banking system to take just two – and what you are left with is the next leg of a global financial crisis. Politicians temporarily "solved" the sub-prime crisis of 2007 and 2008 by nationalising billions' worth of bank debt. While this helped reinject a little confidence into markets, the real upshot was merely to transfer that debt on to public-sector balance sheets.

This kind of card-shuffle trick has a long-established pedigree: after the dotcom bust, Alan Greenspan slashed US interest rates to (then) unprecedented lows, which helped dull the pain, but only at the cost of generating the housing bubble that fed sub-prime. It is not so different to the Ponzi scheme carried out by Bernard Madoff, except that unlike his hedge fund fraud, this one is being carried out in full public view.

The problem is that this has to stop somewhere, and that gasping noise over the past couple of weeks is the sound of millions of investors realising, all at once, that the music might have stopped. Having leapt back into the market in 2009 and fuelled the biggest stock-market leap since the recovery from the Wall Street Crash in the early 1930s, investors have suddenly deserted. London's FTSE 100 has lost 15 per cent of its value in little more than a month. The mayhem on European bourses is even worse, while on Wall Street the Dow Jones teeters on the brink of the talismanic 10,000 level.

It is obvious that the sovereign crisis can inflict considerable pain. And it seems to have just begun. Yet perhaps our scenario is too simplistic, too conspiratorial. We ourselves have maintained that the problems with the EU and the euro are probably in excess of whatever the elite had expected – and they did expect a crisis of this sort, one that was supposed to drive the EU into a closer political union. The idea, however, that the power elite could engage in cold-blooded manipulations of whole countries is fairly difficult to countenance. On the other hand, there are historical speculations that JP Morgan, at the height of his wealth, controlled in some sense up to half of the profitable enterprises in the United States. Wealth can be concentrated and great wealth begets wealth, especially because the current [fiat money](#) system that tends to collapse the middle class.

Assume somehow that the unrolling sovereign crisis is indeed a prelude to a fear-based promotion seeking a worldwide currency (and perhaps some sort of worldwide central bank to go along with it) and one begins to see the outlines of an especially audacious dominant social theme. Perhaps this theme would be buttressed with other fear-based promotions – local and regional wars, even confrontations that utilize small nuclear devices.

We're just speculating here, of course, for our window on power elite activities extends only to a modest comprehension of how elite promotions might operate. Yet even in stating this, we should also point out that these themes are promoted by a vast array of institutions – media properties, think tanks, NGOs and assorted non-profits, not to mention governmental entities. To accept the idea of dominant social themes is to accept that the elite has tremendous influence worldwide and especially in the West. We're past that point of course. We do accept it.

We would also point out that to try to force the issue now of a truly global currency would be audacious in the extreme. Citizens of the Anglo-American axis are up in arms over the poor economy and Europe is smoldering as well. Never has a sociopolitical awakening swept the West as it has now – courtesy of the Internet and its continual truth-telling. There is more and more anger over central banking, the West's serial wars, the over-taxation and the general dysfunction of regulatory democracy.

Does what we have proposed skirt the fringes of reality? If the powers-that-be were ready to tolerate a protracted series of sovereign crises in Europe – and it may be there is not much more to arrange -- alongside perhaps some unsettling wars, it might be possible to traumatize citizens of the West enough to make them amenable to global solution. This solution in our estimation might include the return to some sort of gold standard, but unfortunately not a market-based one. The elite would try to insist on a standard that it could in a sense control and continually manage – at least in our opinion.

Conclusion: All this is no doubt far fetched. But the Panic of 1907 and the subsequent erection of the Federal Reserve – if one accepts the relationship between the two – provides us with a template for the same sort of manipulation on a bigger scale (assuming one believes in the possibility of JP Morgan's market manipulations). However it is also true that this article itself is evidence of the difficulties that the elite would face in implementing the kind of program we have suggested. After all, if we are able to anticipate it, it has occurred to others as well. This is perhaps the elite's biggest challenge in the era of the Internet. It is most difficult to promote an audience, if it comes to that, aware of your intentions and the permutations of your strategies.

News & Analysis

Europe Braces for Chaos

by Staff Report [article link](#)

May 25, 2010 | The Daily Bell

The Daily Bell [home page](#)

The Number One Tool Of Financial Enslavement

by Economic Collapse [article link](#) [article link](#)

05.28.10 | The Economic Collapse | The Silver Bear Cafe

Excerpt:

Today there is a great awakening going on across the United States and all around the world. Tens of millions of people are becoming aware of the growing tyranny of the global financial elite. Yet millions of those same people willingly enslave themselves to those very same financial powers. So how is this happening? It is called debt. The financial powers of the world use it to enslave individuals, corporations and governments. For thousands of years humanity has been taught the proverb that "the borrower is the servant of the lender", and yet today hundreds of millions of people around the globe willingly have run out and have made themselves servants of the money powers. You see, when you borrow money from a financial institution, you not only have to pay that money back, but you also have to pay a significant amount of interest. In fact, often the interest ends up being much more than the principal of the loan. Thus the borrower ends up devoting a great deal of his or her labor to earning money for the lender. Certainly there are times when it is necessary to borrow money. But what Americans have been doing over the last 30 years goes far beyond "necessary" borrowing. In fact, the massive debt binge of the last three decades has been nothing short of a huge percentage of the American population entering into willing financial enslavement. ...

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [7:44 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

G. William Domhoff: There Are No Conspiracies

There Are No Conspiracies

by G. William Domhoff [article link](#)

March 2005

Many people seem to believe that America is ruled from behind the scenes by a conspiratorial elite with secret desires, i.e., by a small secretive group that wants to change the government system or put the country under the control of a world government. In the past, the conspirators were usually said to be secret Communist sympathizers who were intent upon bringing the United States under a common world government with the Soviet Union, but the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 undercut that theory. So most conspiratorial theorists changed their focus to the United Nations as the likely controlling force in a "new world order," an idea which is undermined by the powerlessness of the United Nations and the unwillingness of even moderates with the American power structure to give it anything but a limited role.

For a smaller group of conspiratorial thinkers, a secret group of operatives located within the CIA was responsible for many terrible tragedies and assassinations since the 1960s, including the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Problems with a conspiratorial view

There are several problems with a conspiratorial view that don't fit with what we know about power structures. First, it assumes that a small handful of wealthy and highly educated people somehow develop an extreme psychological desire for power that leads them to do things that don't fit with the roles they seem to have. For example, that rich capitalists are no longer out to make a profit, but to create a one-world government. Or that elected officials are trying to get the constitution suspended so they can assume dictatorial powers. These kinds of claims go back many decades now, and it is always said that it is really going to happen this time, but it never does. Since these claims have proved wrong dozens of times by now, it makes more sense to assume that leaders act for their usual reasons, such as profit-seeking motives and institutionalized roles as elected officials. Of course they want to make as much money as they can, and be elected by huge margins every time, and that can lead them to do many unsavory things, but nothing in the ballpark of creating a one-world government or suspending the constitution.

Second, the conspiratorial view assumes that the behind-the-scenes leaders are extremely clever and knowledgeable, whereas social science and historical research shows that leaders often make shortsighted or mistaken decisions due to the limits placed on their thinking by their social backgrounds and institutional roles. When these limits are exposed through stupid mistakes, such as the failure of the CIA at the Bay of Pigs during the Kennedy Administration, then conspiratorial theorists assert that the leaders failed on purpose to fool ordinary people.

Third, the conspiratorial view places power in the hands of only a few dozen or so people, often guided by one strong leader, whereas sociologists who study power say that there is a leadership group of many thousands for a set of wealth-owning families that numbers several million. Furthermore, the sociological view shows that the groups or classes below the highest levels buy into the system in various ways and support it. For example, highly trained professionals in medicine, law, and academia have considerable control over their own lives, make a good living, and usually enjoy their work, so they go along with the system even though they do not have much political power.

Fourth, the conspiratorial view often assumes that clever experts ("pointy-headed intellectuals") with bizarre and grandiose ideas have manipulated the thinking of their hapless bosses. But studies of policy-making suggest that experts work within the context of the values and goals set out by the leaders, and that they are ignored or replaced if they step outside the consensus (which is signaled by saying they have become overly abstract, idealistic, or even, frankly, "pinko").

Finally, the conspiratorial view assumes that illegal plans to change the government or assassinate people can be kept secret for long periods of time, but all evidence shows that secret groups or plans in the United States are uncovered by civil

liberties groups, infiltrated by reporters or government officials, and written about in the press. Even secrets about wars and CIA operations -- Vietnam, the Contras, the rationales for Bush's invasion of Iraq in 2003 -- are soon exposed for everyone to see. As for assassinations and assassination attempts in the United States, from McKinley to Franklin D. Roosevelt to John F. Kennedy to Martin Luther King, Jr., to Robert F. Kennedy to Reagan, they have been the acts of individuals with no connections to any power groups.

Because all their underlying assumptions are discredited by historical events and media exposures, no conspiracy theory is credible on any issue. If there is corporate domination, it is through leaders in visible positions within the corporate community, the policy planning network, and the government. If there is class domination, it is through the same mundane processes that social scientists have shown to be operating for other levels of the socioeconomic system.

More on illegal government actions

Even though there are no conspiracies, it is also true that government officials sometimes take illegal actions or try to deceive the public. During the 1960s, for example, government leaders claimed that the Vietnam War was easily winnable, even though they knew otherwise. In the 1980s the Reagan Administration defied a Congressional ban on support for anti-government rebels in Nicaragua (the "Contras") through a complicated scheme that raised money for the rebels from foreign countries. The plan included an illegal delivery of armaments to Iran in exchange for money and hostages. But deceptions and illegal actions are usually uncovered, if not immediately, then in historical records.

In the case of the Vietnam War deception, the unauthorized release in 1971 of government documents called The Pentagon Papers (which revealed the true state of affairs) caused the government great embarrassment and turned more people against the war. It also triggered the creation of a secret White House operation to plug leaks (the "Plumbers"), which led in turn to an illegal entry into Democratic Party headquarters during the 1972 elections, an attempted cover-up of high-level approval of the operation, and the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon in the face of impeachment charges. As for the Reagan Administration's illegal activities, they were unraveled in widely viewed Congressional hearings that led to a six-month imprisonment for the president's National Security Adviser for his part in an unsuccessful cover-up, along with convictions or guilty pleas for several others for obstruction of justice or lying to Congress. The Secretary of Defense was indicted for his part in the cover-up, but spared a trial when he was pardoned by President George H. W. Bush on Christmas Eve, 1992.

It is also true that the CIA has been involved in espionage, sabotage, and the illegal overthrow of foreign governments, and that the FBI spied on and attempted to disrupt Marxist third parties, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Ku Klux Klan. But careful studies show that all these actions were authorized by top government officials, which is the critical point here. There was no "secret team" or "shadow government" committing illegal acts or ordering government officials to deceive the public and disrupt social movements. Such a distinction is crucial in differentiating all sociological theories of power from a conspiratorial one.

Claims about the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)

The group said by many conspiratorial thinkers to be at the center of the alleged conspiracy in the United States, the Council on Foreign Relations, is in fact a mere policy discussion forum. It has nearly 3,000 members, far too many for secret plans to be kept within the group. All the CFR does is sponsor discussion groups, debates and speakers. As far as being secretive, it issues annual reports and allows access to its historical archives. Historical studies of the CFR show that it has a very different role in the overall power structure than what is claimed by conspiratorial theorists.

More information

For my responses to an interviewer on the issue of conspiracy, see http://www.publiceye.org/antisemitism/nw_domhoff.html. (article below)

For more about conspiracism, including links to other resources, please visit the [Conspiracy section](#) of [PublicEye.org](#), especially Chip Berlet's excellent article entitled "[Conspiracism as a Flawed Worldview](#)".

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Who Rules America? [home page](#)

Interview: G. William Domhoff

by Chip Berlet [article link](#)

September 2004 | Public Eye

New Internationalist: Don't you study how power elites conspire? How can someone tell the difference between conspiracism and criticism of the status quo based on power structure research?

Domhoff: I think I study how elites strive to develop consensus, which is through such publicly observable organizations as corporate boards and the policy-planning network, which can be studied in detail, and which are reported on in the media in at least a halfway accurate manner. I think this is the opposite of a small, secretive, illegitimate conspiracy because this large group called the power elite is known to the public, clearly states its aims (profit, profit, and more profit, and less government), publishes its policy suggestions, and is seen as legitimate by a great majority of the public.

I also study the way in which elites in the United States and other democracies have agreed for a few hundred years now to settle the issues where they can't reach complete consensus, namely, through elections, which are also public and legitimate, and which can be observed by researchers in a fair amount of detail, including on the issue of campaign finance, and which are reported on fairly well in the media.

The interesting thing with elections, in terms of addressing the conspiracy kind of stuff, is that rival elites have in effect agreed not to get into all out violence and war with each other, although Americans elites did so only 144 years ago in the bloody Civil War. Political scientist John Higley talks of elites coming to "settlements" or "pacts" that lead to elections, but this is not through conspiring, historically speaking, but through sitting down to talk in frustration and exhaustion, usually after fighting each other to a draw over decades.

For the U.S., where there was no fight among elites in the 18th century, partly because they had a bigger common enemy in King George, the elite pact is the Constitution, which cuts all the key deals on property and slaves and government structure, and which is well known for the process of its creation, and was put to the people for a vote, which forced a Bill of Rights, so this is a very visible and legitimate elite pact. Within its context they agree to disagree. Once again, this is just about the opposite of a conspiracy.

Within that broad context, we all know that all of us plot and plan to further our interests on specific issues, not just elites, and we sometimes try out ideas in confidentiality. And within government there are discussions and plans that we do not know about, and there is often an attempt to mislead us, but that is not what I would mean by a conspiracy.

One of the great mistakes of conspiracy theorists is to take these everyday machinations as evidence for some grand conspiracy at the societal and historical levels. These theorists ignore all the evidence that such planning is usually discovered, whether in the media or by elite opponents, and sometimes leads to prosecutions.

There is no falsifying a conspiracy theory. Its proponents always find a way to claim the elite really won, even though everyday people stop some things, or win some battles, or have a say so through elections in which factions of the power elite win political power.

How to tell the difference from power structure research? We study visible institutions, take most of what elites say as statements of their values and intentions, and recognize that elites sometimes have to compromise, and sometimes lose. Conspiracists study alleged behind the scenes groups, think everything elites say is a trick, and claim that elites never lose.

New Internationalist: Why should progressive people be sensitized to the issue of conspiracism? Doesn't conspiracism help build a constituency that challenges that status quo? That's what people like Michael Parenti argues.

Domhoff: Conspiracism is a disaster for progressive people because it leads them into cynicism, convoluted thinking, and a tendency to feel it is hopeless even as they denounce the alleged conspirators.

Conspiracism is so contrary to what most everyday people believe and observe that it actually drives people away because they sense the tinge of craziness to it.

What social psychologists who study social movements say is that a social movement definitely needs a clear and visible opponent that embodies the values that are opposed, and which can be vilified and railed against. But in opposition to the conspiracists, these opponents are readily identifiable and working through visible and legitimate institutions.

So, I would say that the opponents are the corporate conservatives and the Republican Party, not the Council on Foreign Relations, Bilderbergers, and Bohemians. It is the same people more or less, but it puts them in their most important roles, as capitalists and political leaders, which are visible and legitimate...If thought of this way, then the role of a CFR as a place to try to hear new ideas and reach consensus is more readily understood, as is the function of a social club as a place that creates social cohesion. Moreover, those understandings of the CFR and the clubs fit with the perceptions of the members of the elite.

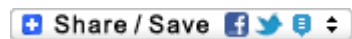
Political Research Associates [home page](#) Public Eye

ZOG ATE MY BRAINS

by Chip Berlet [article link](#)

October 2004 | Issue 372 | New Internationalist

New Internationalist [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [7:32 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Thursday, May 27, 2010

Maj. L. Caudill USMC (Ret): The Gun is Civilization

The Gun is Civilization

by Maj. L. Caudill USMC (Ret) [article link](#)

May 26th, 2010 | SHTF Plan

Human beings only have two ways to deal with one another: reason and force. If you want me to do something for you, you have a choice of either convincing me via argument, or force me to do your bidding under threat of force. Every human interaction falls into one of those two categories, without exception. Reason or force, that's it.

In a truly moral and civilized society, people exclusively interact through persuasion. Force has no place as a valid method of social interaction, and the only thing that removes force from the menu is the personal firearm, as paradoxical as it may sound to some.

When I carry a gun, you cannot deal with me by force. You have to use reason and try to persuade me, because I have a way to negate your threat or employment of force.

The gun is the only personal weapon that puts a 100-pound woman on equal footing with a 220-pound mugger, a 75-year old retiree on equal footing with a 19-year old gang banger, and a single guy on equal footing with a carload of drunk guys with baseball bats. The gun removes the disparity in physical strength, size, or numbers between a potential attacker and a defender.

There are plenty of people who consider the gun as the source of bad force equations. These are the people who think that we'd be more civilized if all guns were removed from society, because a firearm makes it easier for a [armed] mugger to do his job. That, of course, is only true if the mugger's potential victims are mostly disarmed either by choice or by legislative fiat—it has no validity when most of a mugger's potential marks are armed.

People who argue for the banning of arms ask for automatic rule by the young, the strong, and the many, and that's the exact opposite of a civilized society. A mugger, even an armed one, can only make a successful living in a society where the state has granted him a force monopoly.

Then there's the argument that the gun makes confrontations lethal that otherwise would only result in injury. This argument is fallacious in several ways. Without guns involved, confrontations are won by the physically superior party inflicting overwhelming injury on the loser. People who think that fists, bats, sticks, or stones don't constitute lethal force watch too much TV, where people take beatings and come out of it with a bloody lip at worst. The fact that the gun makes lethal force easier works solely in favor of the weaker defender, not the stronger attacker. If both are armed, the field is level.

The gun is the only weapon that's as lethal in the hands of an octogenarian as it is in the hands of a weight lifter. It simply wouldn't work as well as a force equalizer if it wasn't both lethal and easily employable.

When I carry a gun, I don't do so because I am looking for a fight, but because I'm looking to be left alone. The gun at my side means that I cannot be forced, only persuaded. I don't carry it because I'm afraid, but because it enables me to be unafraid. It doesn't limit the actions of those who would interact with me through reason, only the actions of those who would do so by force. It removes force from the equation... and that's why carrying a gun is a civilized act.

By Maj. L. Caudill USM C (Ret)

The greatest civilization is one where all citizens are equally armed and can only be persuaded, never forced.

Remember only two defining forces have ever offered to die for you, Jesus Christ and the American Soldier. One died for your soul, the other for your freedom.

SHTF Plan [home page](#)

"Do no harm, cause no loss" is the responsibility of an armed citizenry, the "common law of the land" where we knowingly act as the surety of-and-for our family-community(-ies). [Mammon or Messiah research]

GunsAmerica

Magazine and Discussion Forum

The State of the Gun Blogosphere

by Steve PW Johnson [article link](#)

Article includes:

Twenty Gun Blogs Not to Miss and Gun Blog Directory

This directory contains over two hundred different gun blogs that have been classified into three main categories. The views and opinions expressed in these blogs vary widely and are not necessarily the views and opinions of the author or of GunsAmerica.

March 25, 2010 | The Firearms Blog

GunsAmerica [magazine home](#)

The Firearms Blog [home page](#)

MMr Follow-up

May 28, 2010

Excellent Comment:

Very good article, the only point I wish to add is that carrying a gun for self defense also requires a lot of training. If you don't train with it, you might not be able to defend yourself properly. The idea that a bad guy will start running at the mere sight of a gun, is false most of the time. If you carry a gun, know how to use it. [May 27, 2010 7:50 PM]

Handgun World Show [home page](#)

Today's Survival Show [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:53 AM](#) [1 comments](#)

[Michael Payne: The Silence of the Lambs](#)

A passive, submissive mindset grips America: "the silence of the lambs"

By Michael Payne [article link](#)

May 27, 2010 | OpEdNews

Yes, this is yet another article about the deafening silence, a most critical problem, that plagues our nation. America's wars rage on endlessly; nine years in Afghanistan, seven in Iraq, with Iran being the next potential target. War is now a part of our national psyche, deeply embedded within our culture. And as we go from one war to another I am struck by the eerie silence that emanates from the American people; it is the silence of the lambs.

No matter how many years these wars have been going on, no matter how much they have cost, how many troops have needlessly died, or how much destruction they have inflicted on the nations that we have invaded and occupied, the people of America remain in a state of passive silence; seemingly unwilling, unable, or afraid to express any form of protest or dissent.

How did we in America ever get to this point? It's not really difficult to explain. Over time the American people have been subjected to a process of patriotic mind conditioning primarily carried out by the government and the various elements of our national media. We have been taught that we must support our troops and every war, and accept and condone all military actions without exception or condition; and we have done that, time and again, except in the case of the Vietnam War which will be discussed below.

So what are the specific elements or institutions in America that have, over time, contributed to this insidious process of patriotic mind control. To begin with, let's take our mainstream national media; radio, TV, and newspapers that are largely controlled by corporate America. Do you ever hear or read anything of real substance being reported or discussed relative to America's military actions around the world? Of course not, for the corporate monopolies that control our airwaves and newsprint have effectively muzzled their anchors and reporters.

You can watch TV and listen to radio 24/7; but you will not get the truth, the real facts or any in-depth analysis of what is really going on with these wars that have brought shock and awe to selected nations or the massive military costs that our sucking the lifeblood out of our nation. No one ever talks about war; it is taboo, something that we simply have no time to discuss. And, God forbid, that we should speak out against war by patriotic dissent. Why, someone might accuse us of treason!

Does CNN ever discuss the pros and cons of our current wars, the exact reasons why our military is in Afghanistan, why we are illegally sending our drones of war across the borders of Pakistan, why our peace president continues to reject diplomacy in dealing with Iran? Does MSNBC, the supposed liberal-leaning network? Does Fox News, the ultra-conservative right wing mouthpiece of corporate America and the GOP? The answer is no, no and no! Never, not ever; that is entirely off limits and it must be tightly controlled.

What about the U.S. Congress? What a laugh, what a joke to think that this body of corporate owned and controlled pseudo legislators would take the time to discuss these wars and the extreme costs. How could they even think about challenging America's war agenda for it would be labeled as non-patriotic and almost treasonous to do so; and because it would result in the immediate stoppage of corporate contributions to their campaign war chests? Except for a handful of true patriots in Congress, the vast majority of our elected representatives have decided to pledge allegiance to corporate power, to the military-industrial complex, no longer to this nation or the people.

Let's compare our on-going wars today with the Vietnam War and determine why there was so much protest then and the barest of protests now. During the Vietnam debacle that eventually took the lives of 58,000 U.S. troops, we had a national draft. When the deaths and casualties among our troops began to escalate, loud protests came from two sources: young Americans, including many college students who did not want to become the next victims of that insanity; secondly, the parents of all those young Americans.

Today, there is no draft, we have an entirely volunteer military so there is no protest or dissent from young Americans or their parents. So, if there is no danger of being drafted, it follows that there is no great opposition to the wars and the destruction that they are causing in foreign nations and to our economic stability. Let sleeping dogs lie.

Even though there is no draft I have seen pictures of U.S. military recruiters going into high schools in America and testing the physical prowess of teenage students. While I believe that colleges should make up their own mind about letting recruiters talk to students, I also believe that these recruiters have no business whatsoever in our high schools and should be barred.

What's happening in America cannot continue. We as a nation and a society are in deep trouble. Our economy is collapsing as our jobs continue to be outsourced to China and other overseas nations. Our national debt is out of control. While this nation is hemorrhaging and in a downward spiral, we simply cannot continue to give the Pentagon over one trillion dollars each and every year for conducting unnecessary, unjustifiable wars to expand our military empire. We are destroying the remaining wealth of America.

This passive, submissive silence of the American people must be broken; if we do not wake up, if we cannot rise up in peaceful protest and dissension, then we will be accepting and actually condoning what is going on and it is we who will be directly responsible for the demise of our once great nation.

Michael Payne concentrates his writings on domestic social and political matters, American foreign policy and climate change. His articles have appeared on Online Journal, Information Clearing House, Peak Oil, Google News and many others.

OpEdNews [Articles](#) by Michael Payne
OpEdNews [home page](#)

The Survival Podcast

[Episode-443](#) **Change Your Nation By Changing Yourself**

May 26th, 2010

Today's show notes are brief as I will let most of this show speak for itself. While I will talk about "politics" today I won't tell you what to think or how to vote. Instead I will talk about the dark reality of America's past and present, I will tell you some shocking facts about this nation, I will even admit that the views many have about things like the "New World Order" are grounded in a lot of fact in addition to a lot of fiction.

Today my hope is to tell you how we can fix America with the current system we have, why we can count on our fellow Americans and the common values I think we all share regardless of any political affiliation. In short I will tell you how we can fix America but I will ask you only to liberate yourself and trust that America will know what to do with a new found liberty that will be the result of individual action.

The Survival Podcast [home page](#)

The Lew Rockwell Show
[Podcast-148 Nullification!](#)
May 3, 2010

Lew Rockwell interviews Tom Woods, on his new book, *Nullification: How to Resist Federal Tyranny in the 21st Century*. Thanks to the Internet, Americans can learn about such forbidden ideas as the Principles of 1798, when Jefferson and Madison laid out the idea that to give the central government the sole ability to interpret the constitution was the path to tyranny, and that the states have the right and the duty to oppose tyrannical actions by the feds.

Regimists try to demonize the idea of nullification, as they attempt to demonize all ideas that undermine centralized power, but that is not scaring libertarians, Tea Party people, and other dissidents. Nullification, decentralization, self-government, self-determination, even secession: the time of these un-PC ideas is here, and the Woods book may be the handbook of the revolution.

The Lew Rockwell Show [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [7:53 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Mary Zerkel: \$1 Trillion for Wars Makes No Sense By Any Measure

\$1 Trillion for Wars Makes No Sense By Any Measure

By Mary Zerkel [article link](#) [article link](#)
May 26, 2010 | Huffington Post | ICH

What is \$1 trillion really worth?

This May 30 at 10:06 a.m., we will reach another dubious milestone in our almost nine years of war. At that precise moment, we will have spent \$1 trillion in operational costs for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, tracked by the National Priorities Project's cost of war counter.

What is \$1 trillion worth? NPP explains it this way: if you made a million dollars a year, it would take you a million years to earn \$1 trillion.

Of course, most Americans don't earn \$1 million a year. In fact 9.9 percent earn nothing because they are unemployed. It's a shame that we have wasted that \$1 trillion on war, rather than on a WPA-style program to repair our roads and bridges that could have hired those 15.3 million people out of work for \$50,000 apiece. And on top of that, we would still have had a cool \$235 billion left over to invest in clean energy, producing 3.9 million green jobs while reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, [according to a study by the University of Massachusetts, Amherst](#).

Many such tradeoffs exist, tantalizing us with what could have been. For instance, with that \$1 trillion we could have given 4-year scholarships at state universities to the 2 million freshmen currently enrolled - and do the same thing again in each of the next 23 years. Or we could have provided the estimated 500,000 homeless families across the U.S. with affordable housing - and done that each year for the next 17 years.

In other words, \$1 trillion has the potential to completely wipe out major domestic social problems that desperately need funding as we cope with the effects of the great recession.

But some very different choices have been made. Runaway spending on the wars and the military in general, puts us in a situation where priorities like education, housing and many other vital domestic needs will be taking a back seat. Is war worth it?

Congress is on the verge of approving yet another "emergency" war spending supplemental, this time for \$34 billion to pay for the escalation of troops in Afghanistan. Last weekend (May 22-23) for the first time the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan surpassed those in Iraq. We're winding down one misguided conflict only to accelerate another. And we're doing so with borrowed money. For generations we will be paying the price of these wars with a diminished capacity to respond to the needs of people and communities in our own country.

Sadly, our unfunded domestic needs are not the only cost of war. Why do we continue to spend in pursuit of a military solution in Afghanistan when nearly nine years of war should prove that it is not working? Imagine what spending a fraction of that money on building schools for Afghan girls, or rebuilding an infrastructure decimated by 30 years of war and occupation, could do for the "hearts and minds" we currently are trying to win through drone strikes and the spring offensive in Khandahar.

The human and economic cost of the wars cannot be separated. In yet another sad convergence, we will reach this \$1 trillion milestone on Memorial Day weekend. There is no way to quantify the tragedy of the lost lives of the U.S. soldiers and countless Iraqi and Afghan civilians. Each dollar spent on the wars not only was diverted from peaceful, productive projects, but also contributed to these lives lost. That is the greatest tragedy of all.

Take some time this weekend to remember those who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. And take a moment to let your members of Congress know that this out-of-control war spending is NOT worth one more dollar or one more life.

Go [here](#) to find your Representative's contact information.

The Huffington Post [home page](#)
Information Clearing House [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [7:05 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

[Ira Chernus: Neocon Vampires Sink Their Fangs Into the Tea Parties](#)

Neocon Vampires Sink Their Fangs Into the Tea Parties

By Ira Chernus [article link](#)

May 27, 2010 | AlterNet

Remember the neoconservatives? Maybe you don't. Their death was announced on the cover of Time magazine long before George W. Bush left the White House. By now you might think that they're, thankfully, only a footnote to the history of a frightening bygone era.

But no. Like vampires, the neocons never die. They constantly revive themselves, going where the vein is richest, eager to feed upon new blood. Now -- we should have seen it coming -- they are sinking their fangs into the Tea Party. That's where the fresh political blood is, so that's where the neocons are.

Their [latest calling card](#) is a headline in the Washington Post: "THE NEW CULTURE WAR," with "CULTURE WAR" spelled out in blood red letters. The subhead: "On one side, the forces of free enterprise. On the other, an expanding and paternalistic government. It's time to choose."

It sounds like the Tea Party, alright; something you'd hear from Glenn Beck or Limbaugh. But in fact it was emblazoned across the top of the Post's Sunday Outlook section, probably the most influential opinion page of all for the nation's centrist inside-the-beltway political elite.

And the author is no Tea Party or FoxNews lunatic fringer. He is Arthur C. Brooks, president of the neoconservatives' flagship institution, the widely-respected American Enterprise Institute. His WaPo article is a juicy free advertisement for his new book, *The Battle: How the Fight Between Free Enterprise and Big Government Will Shape America's Future*. And he's got some fancy friends endorsing it.

"This is the playbook for the resurgence of the conservative movement," says none other than Dick Cheney, on the [book jacket](#). It's "a must-read for conservatives who want our movement to dominate," exclaims a blurb from Karl Rove.

Like any good bureaucrat, Brooks is out to revive his organization and make it dominate again. He knows that the neocons have faced death by irrelevance several times in the past. So he's doing what Ann Rice's vampires do: resurrecting his movement by dressing it up to suit the times, so neocons can pass as ordinary Tea Party folks, just a tad more clever, witty, and charming than the rest.

Brooks and his new wave of neocons are truly clever in one way. They understand the Tea Party especially well because the same anxiety lies at the heart of both movements. They both appeal to people who feel powerless, unable to shape their own lives, bewildered by a society that seems to be spinning out of anyone's control, and certainly out of their control. The old familiar rules of the game just don't seem to apply any more. And that's scary -- especially to the older white men who form the core of support for both groups.

Lesser names on the back cover of Brooks' book get at this deeper meaning. Neocon morality czar Bill Bennett blurbs that it's about much more than the economy, stupid: "The Battle uncovers liberalism's true grand agenda—to change America's culture and the American way." Marvin Olasky, the creator of "compassionate conservatism" and one of Brooks' mentors, gushes: "The Battle shows how Washington power-grabbers use financial fears to tell the rest of us how we must live" and it "teaches us how to fight back."

What American way? And fight back against whom? Newt Gingrich, who wrote the book's preface, has the answers: Brooks is calling all who believe in "individual liberty, equality of opportunity, the right to pursue happiness, the work ethic" to fight against the "elitist redistributionist leftist ... radicalism of the Obama-Pelosi-Reid machine."

Neocons, like military leaders, have always relied on the same old trick: Create a fictional caricature of your opponent as a threat to your very existence and rally the troops to fight against it. That's how the neocons first came to prominence. Though their movement has diffuse roots that go back to the 1940s, it really crystallized (pardon the pun) in the late 1960s under the tutelage of Irving Kristol, who led the intellectual counter-attack against the cultural radicalism of the era.

"If there is any one thing that neoconservatives are unanimous about, it is their dislike of the counterculture," Kristol once wrote. The movement's other godfather, Norman Podhoretz, agreed: "Revulsion against the counterculture accounted for more converts to neoconservatism than any other single factor."

Why revulsion? Because of the hippies' supposed "hedonism" and irresponsible self-indulgence. Neocons, on the other hand, believed in original sin: People are inherently selfish; if they won't restrain their desires and follow traditional rules, society will degenerate into "moral anarchy." That's what Kristol feared was happening in the late '60s: Because the radicals would not "control their appetites," America was engulfed in "confusion and disorientation, all embellished with a veneer of 'equality.'" "Nobody was in charge," Podhoretz complained; the counterculture was "a vulgar plot to undermine Western civilization itself."

The '60s neocons did worry that liberal Democrats wanted too much government regulation of the free market. But for them that was merely a symbol of the larger issue of "hippie hedonism" versus old-fashioned bourgeois self-restraint. Free enterprise capitalists channel their selfish desires into the marketplace, according to Kristol. They accept conventional moral rules and "the merits of deferred gratification." That makes them "a people of firm moral convictions, a people of self-reliance and self-discipline."

The essential issues were moral, not economic. "If you delegitimize the bourgeois society," Kristol wrote, "the market economy—almost incidentally—is also delegitimized."

Ever since, the neocons have been fighting the same war: self-restraint against self-expression, traditional rules against individual freedom. For them, it was a “culture war” -- a term they largely created. In fact, a raft of careful studies have shown that there is no real culture war in the U.S. because few people consistently hold either all liberal or all conservative views. Most pick and choose, depending on the issue, and end up somewhere in the middle.

But neocons have found it useful to promote the simplistic idea of a left-versus-right “culture war” to rally their troops against the left. And the belief in a clear-cut dividing line between good and evil made their followers feel more secure, convinced that they were “the good guys.”

To keep their war going, though, the neocons had to keep shifting the issue focus. By the mid-‘70s the counterculture no longer seemed like much of a threat to anyone, much less to civilization itself. So the neocons whipped up renewed cold war fervor to fend off “the commies.” They hoped to revive a post-Vietnam nation’s belief in traditional values -- absolute good against absolute evil -- and a willingness to accept authority, follow orders, and sacrifice oneself for the values handed down from above.

After the cold war ended, Irving Kristol’s son William still called for the U.S. to “go abroad in search of monsters to destroy” and gain a permanent “benevolent global hegemony.” Thus the neocons wrote the script for the Bush-Cheney “war on terror.”

The neocons, like Bush himself, were not concerned chiefly to protect the nation from foreign “terrorists.” They urged a return to the fighting spirit, above all, to revive what Bill Kristol called “a clear moral purpose,” to “restore a sense of the heroic” by making sacrifices for “the defense of the nation and its principles.” They were using the “war on terror” to continue their war on the ‘60s counterculture.

Now economic disaster has pushed terrorism from the center of public concern. When pollsters ask, “What is the biggest problem facing the nation?” they often don’t even offer “terrorism” as an option. In a nation plagued by unemployment and foreclosure anxiety, what’s a neocon to do?

Join the Tea Party, it seems. Make “big government,” not hippies or “commies” or “terrorists,” the new symbol of frighteningly rapid change that breaks down the familiar structures and boundaries.

Of course that means inventing fictitious caricatures of “big government,” as Arthur Brooks does in his “culture war” article (which presumably sums up his book). He charges that “our leaders in Washington” are pushing us toward “European-style statism. ... If these forces continue to prevail, America will cease to be a free enterprise nation.” And they may well prevail, he warns, since “the forces of big government are entrenched and enjoy the full arsenal of the administration’s money and influence” -- even though fully 70% of Americans stand against them and want to save traditional American values.

Values -- not incomes and bank accounts -- are the crucial issue, Brooks insists in good neocon fashion. It’s all about “the morality of our worldview.” We are in danger of losing our “unalienable [sic] right” to the pursuit of happiness.

Knowing that you’ll have decent food, housing, and medical care for you and your kids, no matter what -- that’s not real happiness, the neocon insists. Only the rugged individualism of unfettered capitalism brings true happiness, because “only free enterprise brings earned success ... where people enjoy the rewards and face the consequences of their decisions ... based on their work and merit.”

Yes, it’s the same old recycled conservative pap. But the neocons’ bureaucrat-in-chief sees it as the way to resurrect his moribund movement, because it has become Tea Party pap too. “We must articulate moral principles that set forth our fundamental values, and we must be prepared to defend them,” Brooks writes. “This defense is already underway ... The ‘tea party’ demonstrations and the town hall protests ... reveal much about the culture war that is underway.”

To seal the alliance, Brooks throws in another favorite Tea Party fiction: “We believe in principle over political power.” The radical “statists” running the government “talk only of tactics, parties and power,” using “dirty tricks and lots of campaign money” to win at all costs. Apparently Tea Party organizers would never dream of any such thing, at least in the fictional neocon world of Arthur Brooks.

But beneath all the invention, Brooks has revealed that one vital truth. Neoconservatives are natural partners of the Tea Party, because both are still fighting the same imaginary enemy: the hippies, counterculture, and New Left of the late ‘60s. For them, America has never left that era. It’s still a war between the familiar, seemingly secure pre-‘60s way of life and the radicals who would plunge us into “anarchy,” erasing that imagined security forever.

To continue that war, they need a convenient symbol of the enemy. Any force that seems too big for the ordinary person to understand, much less control, will do. “Big government” works just fine, thank you.

But the neocons are more than just vampires, sucking new life from the Tea Party’s blood. Neocons have plenty to offer the Tea Party too -- like a well-honed, well-entrenched, and well-funded network of institutions that can crank out slick words 24/7 to give the Tea Party intellectual respectability.

The neocons also have their rich history of militaristic rhetoric, warning us about foreign enemies like “commies” and “terrorists.” It’s no coincidence that Arthur Brooks handed the American Enterprise Institute’s annual Irving Kristol Award for 2010 to General David Petraeus. Brooks took the occasion to boast (with some truth) of the AEI’s major role in creating the plan for “the Surge” in Iraq. “The sacrifice of our men and women in Iraq was not in vain, and that country today is on a path to freedom,” Brooks said in classic neocon language.

Of course we know what “freedom” means for the neocons and the Tea Party: a few are free to get fabulously wealthy, while most of us see our standard of living stagnate, more and more of us raise children in abject poverty, the nation’s infrastructure crumbles, the environment is despoiled, and the government -- the agent of “we, the people” -- stands aside and just watches it all happen, funneling an ever-larger share of public money into useless military violence around the world.

It was a scary enough vision of freedom when it was promoted only by the neoconservatives or only by the Tea Party. Now that the two are climbing, however tentatively, into the same bed, their marriage of convenience bears careful watching.

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J. Kirk Boyd: 5 Ways to Achieve World Peace and Prosperity

5 Ways to Achieve World Peace and Prosperity -- Yes, It's Possible

By J. Kirk Boyd [article link](#)

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Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from [2048: Humanity's Agreement to Live Together](#), by permission of Berrett-Koehler Publishers, copyright 2010.

One of the most pernicious myths is that peace and prosperity are hopelessly complicated and unattainable. 2048 dispels myths. This is untrue. Peace and prosperity can be attained through the realization of five basic fundamental freedoms, for all people, everywhere in the world. They are: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, freedom for the environment, and freedom from fear. Of course, other rights are needed too, but these five fundamental freedoms establish a framework within which other rights can flourish. If our international community remembers these Five Freedoms, and if they become a regular part of our daily lives, then collectively we will carry the core of 2048 in our minds and they will become our way of life.

Please look at your hand for a moment. Hold it up, palm facing you. We all have five fingers, but the first we call a thumb. In appearance it looks different. It stands out. And it is strong. It represents freedom of speech, the idea that stands out, that stands up to dishonesty and corruption.

Next, look at your index finger. We point with this one. It gives us direction. It represents freedom of religion. Each of us is free to choose our own direction, with or without God, and for those who decide that God is their guide, then they are free to have their own relationship with God without the state telling them what that relationship must be. Interference by the state pollutes the relationship with God.

Third is the middle finger, the longest of all. It represents freedom from want, the long road of existence, and the certainty that there will be food, water, shelter, education, and health care for every one of us no matter where we may be on that road.

Next, for many of us, is the marriage ring finger, either the right or the left hand, and for all of us, a finger with a direct link to our nervous system. It represents freedom for the environment. Life. We all have a direct link to the Earth and the ecosystem of which we are a part. When the life of the Earth is spoiled, our lives are spoiled.

Finally, there is our “little finger,” shorter and smaller than the rest. It represents freedom from fear. It’s the “finale” of our hand, our reward. All the others lead to this one.

As you take a look at your hand and recount the Five Freedoms, remember that you didn’t ask for that hand, you were born with it. So too, you do not have to ask for the Five Freedoms, you were born with them. They are five freedoms for all!

Four of these Five Freedoms originated with U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt. He stated the following in his State of the Union address to the U.S. Congress in January 1941:

We look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms:

- * The first is freedom of speech and expression — everywhere in the world.
- * The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way — everywhere in the world.
- * The third is freedom from want — everywhere in the world.
- * The fourth is freedom from fear — everywhere in the world.

The beauty of these Four Freedoms is that they are an outline of an agreement for humanity. The Four Freedoms are a social formula. When we, the people of our international community, have created a social order whereby all people enjoy the first three freedoms — freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom from want — then we will have created a society where we can all share in the fourth freedom, freedom from fear. This formula was born out of a desire not just to end World War II, but as President Roosevelt said “to end the beginning of all wars.” This quote and the Four Freedoms are engraved in granite at the Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C. They are a guiding light for 2048.

I recall being at the Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C., at dusk one evening. It is an outdoor memorial with a mix of monuments, trees, and waterfalls. The many cherry trees were in blossom and a light drizzle gilded the petals with water. My friend and I stood before a large stone wall, perhaps 30 feet high, with the Four Freedoms engraved in large letters on it. At that moment a group of twenty-five or thirty middle-school students, 12 to 14 years old, of all different races — black, white, Latino, Asian — came to the wall.

They were from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, United States, but the rights on that wall applied to any visitor from anywhere in the world. The students laughed and formed small groups to have their pictures taken in front of these freedoms. After the flashes stopped, several turned to touch the wall and run their fingers through the carved grooves of the letters on it. The connection for my friend Bart, who is black, and me, white, was clear: It didn’t matter what color they were, what sex, what religion or what nation they were from — the rights on that wall must become as real in the lives of all people as they are to the fingertips of those children.

Fortunately, we need not wait for the children to grow old for the realization of the Four Freedoms. Roosevelt saw the Four Freedoms as achievable within a generation. Commenting on his speech, he said, “It is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation.” Perhaps he was overly optimistic about the speed at which the Four Freedoms could be achieved everywhere in the world, but steady, immediate action is the message — not to put these rights off forever.

The Four Freedoms are the essence of a good life for all. They ensure the following: We can think freely, say and write what we want, and peacefully organize to protest; we can have a relationship with a god of our choosing, without interference by the state; we can live with security knowing that education and health care will always be available, regardless of circumstance; and finally we can live in peace, without fear of rampant crime and continuing war. In short, the Four Freedoms are the core of our social contract — our agreement about how we will live together.

President Roosevelt’s recitation of the phrase “everywhere in the world” at the end of each freedom is key. He was so adamant about these words that he handwrote them onto the pages of the speech he gave. He made it perfectly clear that the Four Freedoms were not just for Americans. His own speechwriters questioned him about this, saying that Americans wouldn’t be much concerned about the people in Java. Roosevelt’s response was that Americans had better care because we are all interconnected now. So as we strive for the Four Freedoms, we do so for all members of our international community. Security rests not in the well-being of one nation, but in the well-being of all nations.

In effect, the Four Freedoms were a New Deal for the world. Roosevelt had long been a champion of the common man in America. Through the New Deal in America, Roosevelt took the hard edges off of capitalism. He made sure that working people were not left destitute while wealth and power were consolidated into the hands of a few. With the Four Freedoms, he was expanding his gaze to all men and women, in all nations, to ensure that destitution did not befall anyone, for in destitution he saw the seeds of war. His wife, Eleanor, saw these seeds as well. In 1942 she wrote, “If we really do not mean that after this war we intend to see that people the world over have an opportunity to obtain a satisfactory life, then all we are doing is to prepare for a new war.” Recently we have seen the correctness of this insight in Afghanistan, where Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda have grown from the soil of crushing poverty.

Soon after Roosevelt unveiled the Four Freedoms they were incorporated into a multinational wartime strategy. A superpower summit between Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt was held aboard American and British ships in the Atlantic Ocean, on August 10, 1941, eight months after Roosevelt stated the Four Freedoms in his State of the Union address. Roosevelt summoned great courage and strength to rise up out of his wheelchair and walk across a ship while it

was at sea. Each footstep, with crutches, and braces on his legs, was a stride toward a new deal, a new contract, a new agreement for humanity.

The famous Atlantic Charter came out of Roosevelt's meetings with Winston Churchill at sea, and the Four Freedoms were included in that Charter. Like the Four Freedoms speech, the Atlantic Charter was written for everyone. It envisioned a postwar social order "which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want." The embodiment of the Four Freedoms in the Atlantic Charter was a defining moment for the social contract between government and the common person.

While the Four Freedoms ensure dignity and cover most of our social contract among ourselves and our government, we also need a fifth freedom to preserve our planet, including the ecosystem that provides joy and beauty, and also sustains us: freedom for the environment. Just as our human DNA is 98.5 percent the same for all people in all countries, so too our well-being is intertwined with our physical environment.

Equally important, as we have learned from global warming, the health of our environment affects us all, everywhere, and therefore, as with the first Four Freedoms, freedom for the environment must also apply "everywhere in the world." The demise of our planet's ecosystem teaches us the folly of only working on local environmental issues while dramatic degradation takes place worldwide. I recall a lawsuit in which I represented an environmental group seeking to protect old growth forests. We won that lawsuit, but now, because of global warming, the temperatures are not dropping enough to kill the bugs that are today killing the trees. We can't just protect the environment at the local level and expect to have a clean and healthy environment.

Furthermore, it's time to discard the myth that we must be willing to sacrifice the environment for the sake of economic competition. What is needed is uniform, international regulation of the type that an International Convention would provide. Without an international approach there will always be pressures for some countries to sacrifice the environment to gain market advantage. Capitalism works well, but it also tends to create a race to the bottom when it comes to environmental protection.

Creating a fifth freedom for the environment is also harmonious with the other four freedoms. Often destruction of the environment results from the actions of impoverished people who are struggling to survive, whether by cutting down their local forest to an extent that it does not grow back, for example, or overfishing to where fish stocks do not come back. The lack of the first three freedoms, particularly freedom from want, can thus lead to the destruction of the environment. As we reach an agreement regarding the first Four Freedoms, well-being for all, the result is that the need to sacrifice the environment to survive is reduced. In this way, the Five Freedoms are intertwined and the success of each bolsters the others.

Given the strength and well-being that each of us will gain from five universal freedoms, it is also time to dispel another myth — that there is not enough to go around. We pay dearly for the myth that we can't afford to have health care and education for all, and the myth that environmental protection is too costly. These myths are untrue. For example, studies have conclusively shown that not only will global warming cause serious suffering and diminishment of our daily lives, but it will cost us more to pick up the pieces after hurricanes, droughts, and flooding than it will cost to avoid these calamities. Similarly, while education may cost more initially, it creates good jobs to construct schools and results in highly productive workers. The net result of the implementation of 2048 is a financial savings in addition to fulfilling lives.

No Increase In Taxes

Furthermore, securing Five Freedoms for all will not require more taxes! All it will take is the reallocation of existing tax revenues. The real myth is that we must continue the way we are going. Our international community is spending \$1.4 trillion a year on military expenditures. One percent of GNP for all countries is roughly \$500 billion. Therefore, all it would take to bring about the full realization of the Five Freedoms and to usher in a new form of human security would be to reallocate \$500 billion of military costs toward the realization of the Five Freedoms. That would leave \$900 billion for military, more than enough!

The truth is that there is enough funding for the realization of fundamental human rights, including economic and social rights. The problem is those who are presently profiting do not want the public to believe there are sufficient funds for military and human rights because they have an interest in maintaining the status quo. It is time for the human rights community to have the strength and daring to band together so that we have the clout to stand up to this narrow-minded view.

One way that myths are perpetuated is by keeping people unaware of the truth. Today, for example, the United States gives only 0.17 percent, less than one-fifth of 1% of its GNP, to foreign aid, and much of this goes for military purposes, not education and health care. One percent of GNP is not too much to ask, particularly when greater security for ourselves and our children is the result. Just think of the cost if the bird flu or some other pandemic were to arise out of abject poverty in a poor country and then sweep the world, killing tens of millions in all countries and causing utter chaos and financial collapse because goods could no longer be produced and shipped in our global economy. A penny of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

People in the United States, on the whole, like people in all other countries, are fundamentally good and generous souls with whom you can sit and talk at their kitchen tables. Many do not know that their government gives less than one-fifth of 1% to foreign aid and is at the bottom for giving among developed countries. They probably also don't know that the United States spends more on military than all other countries combined. Part of the role of 2048 is to help spread awareness. When people know the truth, they typically support reallocation of resources as part of our agreement to live together, in keeping with their self-interest and morals.

Awareness can be created with a small percentage of people. Just as it will only take 1% of GNP for the realization of education and health care for all, so too it will take only 1% of humanity to share the news of 2048. Word of mouth, spurred by our innate desire to live in peace and security instead of war and want, will spread the word. This 1% of humanity already exists within the arts and media, our nonprofit and for-profit businesses, our places of worship, our universities, and even our governments — now the Internet and 2048 are bringing all these communities together.

Knowledge of the Five Freedoms is essential to achieve this 1% “tipping point” for the success of 2048. Students and the public generally need to be able to recall the Five Freedoms just as easily as they can count the five fingers on their hand. As they learn their rights, they also come to expect them, both from one another and from their governments. What they expect today, they will demand tomorrow. The Five Freedoms are deeply held cultural values that lead to lasting results. Now, with the Five Freedoms for all etched firmly in mind, let us consider each of these freedoms individually.

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Giordano Bruno: World Government: Impractical, Unnecessary, Insane!

World Government: Impractical, Unnecessary, Insane!

By Giordano Bruno [article link](#)

05/23/2010 | Neithercorp Press

Every culture in history has had innumerable difficulties and imbalances, some of them due to a lack of understanding amongst the populace, and many others due to corruption in government. Human beings have been dragging themselves out of the muck over and over again for centuries. The struggle for a better world, a world that meets the standards of our inherent conscience, has always demanded overwhelming labor, bravery, sacrifice, logic, wisdom, and sometimes even genius. And through it all, it has been those men who sought to be truly free that were able to contribute most to the betterment of the human condition. Not just those who are politically free, but also psychologically free.

For many of us, the need to honor and even surpass the accomplishments of those who came before is absolutely tantamount to our success as a species. However, there are many who see the concept of ‘hard work’ as an anathema, a mental “disease” that has left our society running in circles towards a hazy and undefined future. These people believe that there must be a simple solution to all our ills, and if the majority of us weren’t so “stupid”, we would see it as plain as the wide blue sky.

For the ancient Romans, it was assumed that an ever expanding empire and the subjugation of all peoples would cement their legacy, creating a perfect society. For the medieval feudal kingdoms, religious centralization and dominance was the answer. For the British Empire, the forced insinuation of Western culture into “barbaric lands” was meant to “enlighten” the planet. For Soviet Russia, the purging of free thought and the repression of individualism in exchange for collectivism and the advancement of a vaguely defined “greater good” was going to radically progress mankind. For Nazi Germany, it was the purging of those seen as a “hindrance” to biological success, the idea of racial purity, which was going to revolutionize our species. In every case, civilization turned from the ‘great work’ of understanding, individual awareness, and personal liberty, towards offers of what they saw at that time as the easy way out, the secret that would save us all the trouble of coming to terms with ourselves.

Today, we face the broad promotion of yet another “magic solution”, one that some claim is, of course, the only way out of our dire circumstances. The supposedly inspired stratagem I speak of is ‘World Government’.

Members of the elitist class and their cheerleaders have been calling openly for global governance (what they sometimes call the “New World Order”) for the past century. Adolph Hitler, H.G. Wells, Trotsky, James Warburg, Senator William Fulbright, Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, British PM Gordon Brown, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Brazilian President Luis Silva, are only a few of the prominent world figures who have openly supported the end of national sovereignty and the formation of a centralized financial and political global governing body.

Only in the past few weeks the Director of the IMF, Dominique Kahn, has called for global oversight and control of all economic activity and even the institution of a global currency as a way to stop financial instability: [Business Insider article](#), [IMF Speeches](#).

And Barack Obama has called for the formation of a new “International Order” to deal with the threat of “extremism”: [Washington Post article](#).

In this article, we will examine the propaganda and ‘group think’ responsible for the prominence of the World Government concept in the general populace, as well as the many reasons why the notion is implausible as a solution to ANY problem whatsoever. When placed under an objective microscope, the effective practicality of the globalist ideal disappears, and this begs an important question; with the obvious flaws and destructive nature of extreme centralization, why would anyone sane support it?

More Government Makes Us “Safer”?

Ever since the Code of Hammurabi, structured society has believed faithfully in the necessity of law. In those days, laws were assumed to be passed down from the heavens, and the Gods were the ultimate arbitrators. Governments asserted themselves as the “conduits” of divine judgment, and thus publicly accepted moral determination became centralized into the hands of an elite few. Very little has changed in the thousands of years since. People today still see written law as absolutely essential to maintaining civilized behavior, and government as the irreplaceable “creator” and steward of order. In this twisted sort of world view, the idea of continually expanding the power and influence of government is almost an obligation. If the government is the engineer of law, and law is the binding force of a stable civilization, then wouldn’t more government and more law make all of us safer and more ethical?

The error in this way of thinking lay in the fact that “law” is ultimately NOT a determinant of moral judgment, nor is government. Law is an afterthought. Words scribbled on paper, and nothing more. True morality is inborn, universal, determined by the force of conscience, and tempered by the even hand of rationality. It is conscience that resolves what we as individuals are willing to tolerate as law, and what we are not. No law can stop a man from doing something he deeply believes is right. And, no law can constrain a man from ignoring his conscience and committing terrible acts. In the end, government has little to no power over decisions that lay in the hands of individuals, and therefore serves little to no role in the day to day balance of society. In truth, a world of fully self aware and free thinking men and women would render the very notion of centralized government mute.

The only real use of government is not to lord over citizens’ choices, but to safeguard an atmosphere in which individuals are able to make decisions for themselves without the obstacles of despotic or collectivist totalitarianism. This is why the Constitution as a “legal” document is so ingenious and as an event, so vital. It was really the first time in history that government was not the primary arbitrator of law. The common man became judge and jury, mediating what was right and honorable, from that which was course and unethical. The Constitution was the first document to hold government itself to a moral standard of conduct, making it subservient to the demands of the people. For the first time ever, the Western establishment was decentralized, and personal liberty was given primacy over the mechanizations of bureaucracy. This accomplishment cost years of war, blood, and sacrifice.

However, even the Constitution as written law is not eternal without the fortitude of the American conscience. It is not the Constitution that safeguards each of us, but we who safeguard the Constitution. Yet again, law does not make man, man makes, or breaks, law. This fact is lost on many people today. Centralization seems to be the answer to everything. Global governance is touted as the cure for war, terrorism, economic volatility, environmental catastrophe, overpopulation, religious “conflict”, even unhappiness and menial labor! But rarely do we hear any explanation as to how world government would actually solve these issues.

World government is in itself a GOAL, not a SOLUTION. Solutions involve a reasoned and well thought out process, a schematic for the achievement of a goal. I have yet to see anyone outline the methods by which world government is supposed to save us from the imbalances and injustices of society, I have only seen elitists and useful idiots make promises they have no intention of keeping.

People are easily duped by such promises for reasons that are rooted deep in our collective psyches. Human beings tend to search for the path of least resistance, and if the opportunity arises to defer personal responsibility to an imposed authority, they often jump at the chance. This is especially true in cultures infantized by the elevation of superficial desire over practical necessity, or cultures that confuse self-centered behavior with self-aware behavior. Essentially, certain segments of the population have an inclination towards mental and emotional laziness. Surrendering the responsibility of their own destiny and their own development to government gives them comfort, much like a well fed house pet. This feeling of safety, though, is entirely an illusion...

There is no example in the history of human endeavor which supports the theory that more dominant government makes us safer, or allows us greater freedom. No ancient empire ever placed the concerns of the common man over the concerns of the establishment aristocracy unless the common man became a threat to their immediate power. Greek city states such as

Athens had only the semblance of democratic self-rule, which was controlled by a minority of those lucky enough to be designated “citizens”.

Modern examples of government expansion are no better. The British Empire enslaved entire civilizations in the search for centralized global power. The Soviets under Stalin murdered tens of millions in an effort to centralize. Hitler did the same. Communist China under the collectivist fervor of Mao Tse Tung engineered the deaths of 15 to 20 million innocents, and endeavored to use the ‘Cultural Revolution’ as a tool for erasing the very history of the Chinese people. To this day, China is a cesspool of authoritarianism which oppresses and murders citizens to maintain government ascendancy. The European Union, supposedly the model for global governance, has attempted to control numerous personal aspects of daily life, including surveillance of all web and phone traffic in some countries, and even what vitamins people are allowed to take! It is also in the midst of economic collapse, with their common currency, the Euro, hanging by a thin thread; hardly an example of the effectiveness of globalist philosophy.

The United States itself is on the edge of implosion due to unprecedented growth of government. George W. Bush tripled the size of the Federal Government during his tenure, and constructed legislation which if activated allows the Executive Branch to assume de facto administrative control (martial law) without any oversight from Congress or the citizenry. Barack Obama has fully supported these measures and has now indebted the American taxpayer by more than all other presidents combined! Our debts are so great that the private Federal Reserve now continuously prints money out of thin air just to keep the infrastructure of this country breathing. Never have I been confronted with anyone who could give me a well reasoned and logical illustration of how America is better off because of expanded government. For every self proscribed advantage, there are a dozen disgraces.

Misleading terms like “harmonization” are thrown about by globalists as a way to rename old and failed strategies and promote further centralization. Economic equality especially is a favorite pledge of world government proponents, but what does this really mean? If the EU is any indication, harmonization means that everyone must become equally poor. Even in a grand futurist pleasure dome, someone is always going to have more than you. Someone is always going to have something that you want but can’t get. Artificial financial equality is not possible. The drive for it has done nothing but erase the middle class and make all nations similarly unstable, which may have been the goal all along.

If focusing authority into fewer and fewer hands deals us such dreadful results on a national scale, why would anyone believe that our plight would be any better on a global scale? Giving government extreme oversight into personal lives has made no society safer. Freely handing over civil liberties has made no society safer. Handing over individual responsibilities to authoritative bodies has made no society safer. If anything, these strategies have only placed humanity in the most acute peril.

Utopianism, Idealism, And Cartoonland

The “perfect world” is a delusion driven by hubris and naivety. Those who promote Utopianism often presume that their version of social edifice is somehow unique and that the vast majority are too ignorant to grasp the “brilliance” of their methodology. I can’t count how many times I have confronted a Utopian and asked them to outline the specifics of how their perfect world would actually function in a practical way. In every case they cite goals instead of solutions, like “we will end war, get rid of money, no one will have to work hard, everyone will be fed, and energy will be infinitely abundant.” This all sounds quite marvelous, and certainly a world such as the one they describe would be a never-ending Disney vacation, but where is the plan? How does one get from point A to point Z? When asked to actually describe the manner in which globalists and Utopians hope to achieve the world they fantasize over, they usually respond indignantly, accusing you of being “too narrow minded” to understand their idea. Basically, they are implying that they know better for you than you do for yourself.

It is one thing to be passionate over an ideal, and another thing to be blindly obsessed. Imagination is one of the primary keys to progress, but so is sensible application of imagination in the real world, which does not always operate in the way we want it to. Life has its own rhythm, culture its own current, and this must always be taken into consideration when trying to assert our view upon our surroundings. Human beings operate most effectively in an atmosphere of diverse thought. In a centralized system with a single minded philosophy, our principal development becomes stifled and we

suffocate. In most circumstances, forcing the issue of centralization creates unnecessary and severe conflict that poisons every aspect of a population. That is to say, an ideal cannot function unless it adapts suitably to our nature.

Globalists brazenly ignore the issue of human nature, sometimes claiming that such a thing does not even exist. The reason being that inherent human nature is a factor they cannot control, an inconvenient monkey wrench caught in the gears of their flawless machine, grinding everything to a halt. Our inborn desire for sovereignty in all things is one good example of an instinctive quality that defies “management”. We as individuals do not want freedom, we DEMAND freedom, or risk losing our very sanity. In the world of Global Government, however, instincts and intuition must be suppressed and the masses must be molded towards principles that defy our character. In order for overt centralization to succeed in any way, the integrity of the people would have to be eradicated and replaced with fabricated and submissive ethics; passive swarms following a hive mind, all in our best interests of course.

For elitists or anyone else to even consider that this is an acceptable future for our species is wildly and inspiringly absurd. The level of idiocy and arrogance that could drive a man or a group of men to believe they can bend not only society but the human spirit to their will must surely be astonishing. Not only is it not possible, it is also grotesquely bizarre and cartoonish. The decidedly insane often fancy themselves as godlike, and the Elites are prime examples; Mad Hatters parading as intellectually superior ideologues.

Leaders And Followers

All men begin life searching for a path. Some never find their own. Some desperately cling to the paths blazed by others, even when those paths become dangerously wretched. In the absence of foresight, we look for leaders. Leaders provide the advantage of direction, and for some this is enough, but at the cost of individual experience. Once again, we try to avoid the struggle of finding our own direction, and the hardship and pain of making our own decisions. Some of us find the thought of personal failure unbearable. Better to follow someone else and blame them for any shortcomings in ones environment or ones existence. Some of us project those qualities we think we lack onto others and elevate them, turning them from imperfect people into faultless symbols. Some of us simply lose interest and stamina for the fight, roll up into a ball, and become numb to our own weaknesses.

There are indeed great people in this world that cut through the fog and give us a glimpse of a wiser tomorrow, but the efforts of these teachers are in vain if we do not push forward on our own strength. We must become the leaders we once searched for and idolized. We must stop waiting for others to define us, and begin defining ourselves. Each and every man must become his own guide.

The concept of world government plays heavily on our fear of taking responsibility for our own providence. It seduces us with assurances of ease, security, and luxury; things that no government regardless of its size can guarantee. Government in general is only an organization of mere citizens, many of which see themselves as vastly competent and righteous compared to the rest of us, but in contrast are usually rather frail, inept, or downright vile. When we follow the mandates of government without question or conscience, these are the men we are bowing to. It is difficult enough to counter this stupidity and corruption in a single nation, let alone the entire planet. Global Government would act only to insulate the Elite further from accountability and justice, as increased bureaucracy is designed to do. Sovereign states may not be the picture of social health, but they do have the advantage of disconnecting world cultures from adopting a singular and destructive mindset. Diversity in societies helps promote diversity in ideas. Not to mention, helps to protect the world from systematic failures and calamitous chain reactions.

This is why borders and nations are necessary. Not so much to keep peoples separate, but to give possible sanctuary to vibrant ideas and values. To prevent a single overpowering entity from shaping or squashing those who disagree with its self-serving directive. To provide nurturing ground for a new way of living without having to ask permission from the rest of the world before hand. For the possibility that we may finally reach the definitive state of sovereignty, a world in which every individual takes his destiny into his own hands and lives fully, becoming aware, honest, and courageous, and in the process, improving humanity as a whole.

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Tuesday, May 25, 2010

Bill Quigley: Corporations Profit From Permanent War

Memorial Day 2010

Corporations Profit from Permanent War

By Bill Quigley [article link](#)

May 24, 2010 | Information Clearing House

US law officially proclaims Memorial Day "as a day of prayer for permanent peace."

However, the US is much closer to permanent war than permanent peace. Corporations are profiting from wars and lobbying politicians for more. The US, and the rest of the world, cannot afford the rising personal and financial costs of permanent war.

Number One in War

No doubt, the USA is number one in war. This coming year the US will spend 708 billion dollars on war and another \$125 billion for Veterans Affairs - over \$830 billion. In a distant second place is China which spent about \$84 billion on its military in 2008.

The US also leads the world in the sale of lethal weapons to others, selling about one of every three weapons worldwide. The USA's major clients? South Korea, Israel and United Arab Emirates.

Our country has 5 percent of the world's population but accounts for more than 40% of the military spending for the whole world.

Harm

Our nation does not respect our soldiers by engaging in permanent war. War is grinding up our children. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have cost over 5000 US lives and tens of thousands more lives of people in those countries. Over 20% of those in our military who served in these two wars, 320,000 people, have war-related traumatic brain injuries. Suicide rates are up by 26 percent among 18 to 29 year old male veterans in the latest Veterans Administration study. Mental health hospitalizations are now the leading cause of hospital admissions for the military, higher than injuries. On any given night, over 100,000 veterans are homeless and living on our nation's streets.

Rising Costs of War

Since 2001, the US has spent over \$6 trillion (a trillion is a million millions) on war and preparations for war. That is about \$20,000 for every woman, man and child in the US. Iraq and Afghanistan alone have cost the US taxpayer over a trillion dollars since 2001.

No End in Sight

Earlier this month, Marine General James Cartwright, the Vice-Chair of the military Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Army Times that the US can expect continuing war "for as far as the eye can see."

In the name of this perpetual war against terrorism the US still jails hundreds without trial in Guantanamo, holds hundreds more in prisons on bases and in secret detention world-wide, tries to avoid constitutional trials for anyone accused of terrorism, admits it is trying to assassinate an American citizen Muslim cleric in Yemen, and launches deadly drone strikes in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen killing civilians and suspects whenever we decide.

Who benefits from permanent war?

One support for permanent war is that there are corporations in the US which openly lobby for more and more money to be invested in war. Why? Because they profit enormously from government contracts.

President Dwight Eisenhower, who believed in a strong military, warned the US about just this in his farewell address to the nation in 1961.

"In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes."

War is Big Business

War is very big business. People know that private companies are doing much more in war. In January 2010, the Congressional Research Service reported that there are at least 55,000 private armed security contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, and maybe many more - as many as 70,000 in Afghanistan alone.

But much bigger money is available to defense contractors. In 2008 alone, the top ten defense contractors received nearly \$150 billion in federal contracts. These corporations spent millions to lobby for billions more in federal funds and hired ex-military leaders and ex-officials to help them profit off war.

For example, look at the top three defense contractors, Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Northrop Grumman. They demonstrate why perpetual war is profitable and part of the reason it continues.

Lockheed Martin

Lockheed Martin is the largest military contractor in the world with 140,000 employees, taking in over \$40 billion annually, over \$35 billion of which comes from the US government. Lockheed Martin boasts that they have increased their dividend payments by more than 10 percent for the seventh consecutive year - perfectly in line with the increase in war spending by the US. Its chairman, Robert Stevens, received over \$72 million in compensation over the past three years.

Lockheed's board of directors includes a former Under Secretary of Defense, a former US Air Force Commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, a former Deputy Director of Homeland Security, and a former Supreme Allied Commander of Europe. These board members receive over \$200,000 a year in compensation. Its political action committee gave over a million dollars a year to federal candidates in 2009, and is consistently one of the top spending PACs in the US. They

appeal to all members of Congress because they strategically have operations in all fifty states. And, since 1998, Lockheed has spent over \$125 million to lobby Congress.

Northrop Grumman

Northrop Grumman is a \$33 billion company with 120,000 employees. In 2008, it received nearly \$25 billion in federal contracts. Its chairman, Ronald Sugar, received over \$54 million in compensation over the past three years.

Northrop's Board includes a former Admiral of the Navy, a former 20 year member of Congress, a former chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a former commissioner of the Security and Exchange Commission and a former U.S. Naval officer. The members of its board of directors received over \$200,000 each in 2009. Its Pac is listed as making over \$700,000 in federal campaign donations in 2009. Since 1998, it has spent over \$147 million lobbying Congress.

Boeing

Boeing has 150,000 employees and took in over \$23 billion in federal contracts in 2008. With revenues of \$68 billion in 2009, its chair, James McNerney, was paid over \$51 million over the past three years. Its board members are paid well over \$200,000 a year. Boeing's directors include a former U.S. Secretary of Commerce, a former White House chief of staff, a former vice chair of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a former U.S. Ambassador and U.S. Trade Representative. It hosts the 10th largest political action committee, giving away more than one million dollars to federal candidates in 2009. Since 1998, it has spent \$125 million lobbying Congress.

Time to Terminate the Permanent War

These corporations take billions from the government and profit from our perpetual state of war. They recycle some of that money back into lobbying the same people who gave it to them, and hire ex-military and government officials to help smooth the process. Their leaders make tens of millions off this work.

The trillions of dollars that it costs to wage permanent war are taxing the US economy. Yet where are the voices in Congress, Democrat or Republican, that talk seriously of dramatically reducing our military spending? President Obama and the Democrats are effectively continuing the permanent war policies of the Bush years. It is past time for change.

Remember this Memorial Day that, while thousands have been laid in their graves and hundreds of thousands wounded, private military contractors are prospering and profiting as the business of war booms.

The US should not only remember its dead but work to reverse the profitable permanent war that promises to add more names to the dead and disabled in this country and around the world.

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Simon Johnson: The Road To Economic Serfdom

The Road To Economic Serfdom

By Peter Boone and Simon Johnson [article link](#)

May 23, 2010 | Simon Johnson

According to Friedrich von Hayek, the development of welfare socialism after World War II undermined freedom and would lead western democracies inexorably to some form of state-run serfdom.

Hayek had the sign and the destination right but was entirely wrong about the mechanism. Unregulated finance, the ideology of unfettered free markets, and state capture by corporate interests are what ended up undermining democracy both in North America and in Europe. All industrialized countries are at risk, but it's the eurozone – with its vulnerable structures – that points most clearly to our potentially unpleasant collective futures.

As a result of the continuing euro crisis, European Central Bank (ECB) now finds itself buying up the debt of all the weaker eurozone governments, making it the – perhaps unwittingly – feudal boss of Europe. In the coming years, it will be the ECB and the European Union who dictate policy. The policy elite who run these structures – along with their allies in the private sector – are the new overlords.

We can argue about who exactly are the peasants, the vassals, and the lords under this model – and what services exactly will end up being exchanged. But there is no question we are seeing a sea change in the post-war system of property, power, and prosperity across Western Europe, just as Hayek feared. An overwhelming debt burden will bring down even the proudest people.

The ECB-EU approach will not of course return countries to reasonable levels of growth – the debt overhang is simply too large. The southern and western periphery of the eurozone cannot grow out of their debts under these arrangements, and so will stumble from stabilization program to stabilization program – just like Latin America did during the 1980s. This is bound to be acrimonious, leading to hostile politics, social unrest, and more economic crises.

The International Monetary Fund will do just what the EU and ECB asks to keep the charade in place. The old days when all member countries got nice presents from the euro zone are long gone; now it is all instructions and austere requirements. But enough resources will be provided to keep rolling everything over.

The top three French players – President Nicolas Sarkozy, Jean-Claude Trichet (ECB), and Dominique Strauss-Kahn (IMF) – seem to be enjoying themselves; presumably they think they will end up running things. More surprising is the reaction of other European leaders, who genuinely seem able to convince themselves that what they are doing makes sense – as opposed to being a series of crazed improvisations.

The market is telling them that their euro rescue schemes make no sense, and the market is probably right. Faced with the ugly reality of the loss of confidence in European finance and institutions, the Germans and even the normally sensible Swedish government are increasingly blaming “irrational” markets and speculators for homegrown problems.

The currently preferred messy solution of the EU leaves the world at risk of shocks like we observed this week. This particular iteration may blow over, but another will arise when there is backlash in Athens, Dublin, Lisbon, or – heaven forbid – Madrid.

Meanwhile, rational market participants are selling debt of risky nations, and getting out of the euro. The whole fiasco is now leading to a messy shift away from risky assets all around the world, and the cost to the world of such volatility is not small. Debt peonage looms for a wide range of countries that were recently thought immune to serious fiscal crisis, including the United States and UK.

It is inappropriate for the Europeans to subject the rest of the world to these large, chronic risks. Europe should also recognize how disorderly insolvencies end – it is never pretty. The 1970s crisis in Britain is the model for what may go

wrong. Ongoing large strikes, populations disenchanted with all authority, and great economic disruption are inevitably the outcome. When the assets are very cheap, deep-pocketed investors from the US, China, India and of course Russia will swoop in for the crown jewels.

What should be done? It is time to look in the mirror and recognize the problem. Several nations in Europe are bordering on insolvency, and it is now pretty clear that we shouldn't just "bandage" that over for a few years with large aid packages.

To deal with this insolvency we need to restructure the debts of those nations. But this has to be done in a way that does not destabilize Europe's fragile banking system. And it needs to be credible enough so that once restructured, the troubled nations will be able to finance themselves easily.

Europe now has the 750bn package of assistance in place, and they should use it to fix the problem once and for all. The ingredients for a solution include:

Announcing an orderly restructuring of the periphery countries' debt (Greece, Portugal, Ireland and possibly others also). This should start with a standstill and a program of fiscal financing while budget cuts are put in place.

Regulatory forbearance should be explicitly provided to all European banks, with a backstop of ECB liquidity, and a 500bn euro support program to provide capital injections – as was done in the United States, 2008-09.

The nations that are not restructured need to be supported via ECB liquidity lines that guarantee the rollover of their government debt.

The G20 needs to provide support to prevent chaotic foreign exchange markets but also accept a large further devaluation of the euro. At some point the G20 will need to intervene to support the euro via central banks.

Such a comprehensive package of measures would be painful, but it is the only realistic solution to this chaos. It would also restore some credibility to Mr. Trichet and the ECB, who, at this stage, appear captives the fiscal crises in the euro zone.

Unfortunately, there is no leadership today in Europe that could take such decisive actions, so Europe will only reform itself dragged kicking and screaming through successive crises until the current, and many ensuing, problems are resolved.

The UK and US need to prepare themselves for more storms. The United States will be in the more pleasant position as the world's safe haven, but this will only encourage America's profligate politicians to spend more and build more debt.

The UK will bear much more pain from euro devaluation and financial dislocation, all exacerbated by its own large deficit and debts. We might well see one more invasion across the channel, this time by bond vigilantes who question Britain's ability to rein in inflation as it builds too large debts.

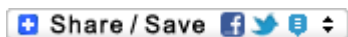
At the end of this great tumult, Europe and the UK will have sound fiscal regimes. Debt will be defaulted on or inflated away, and nations will have dramatically cut spending.

Hayek's predicted demise of western society will prove correct, but welfare systems will prove the victim, rather than the mechanism, erased by a political and financial elite gone awry.

An edited version of this article appeared in the [Sunday Telegraph \(UK\)](#) this morning.

13 Bankers [home page](#)

The Baseline Scenario [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [8:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Monday, May 24, 2010

Chris Hedges: The Greeks Get It

The Greeks Get It

By Chris Hedges [article link](#)

May 24, 2010 | Truthdig

Here's to the Greeks. They know what to do when corporations pillage and loot their country. They know what to do when Goldman Sachs and international bankers collude with their power elite to falsify economic data and then make billions betting that the Greek economy will collapse. They know what to do when they are told their pensions, benefits and jobs have to be cut to pay corporate banks, which screwed them in the first place. Call a general strike. Riot. Shut down the city centers. Toss the bastards out. Do not be afraid of the language of class warfare—the rich versus the poor, the oligarchs versus the citizens, the capitalists versus the proletariat. The Greeks, unlike most of us, get it.

The former right-wing government of Greece lied about the size of the country's budget deficit. It was not 3.7 percent of gross domestic product but 13.6 percent. And it now looks like the economies of Spain, Ireland, Italy and Portugal are as bad as Greece's, which is why the euro has lost 20 percent of its value in the last few months. The few hundred billion in bailouts for other faltering European states, like our own bailouts, have only forestalled disaster. This is why the U.S. stock exchange is in free fall and gold is rocketing upward. American banks do not have heavy exposure in Greece, but Greece, as most economists concede, is only the start. Wall Street is deeply invested in other European states, and when the unraveling begins the foundations of our own economy will rumble and crack as loudly as the collapse in Athens. The corporate overlords will demand that we too impose draconian controls and cuts or see credit evaporate. They have the money and the power to hurt us. There will be more unemployment, more personal and commercial bankruptcies, more foreclosures and more human misery. And the corporate state, despite this suffering, will continue to plunge us deeper into debt to make war. It will use fear to keep us passive. We are being consumed from the inside out. Our economy is as rotten as the economy in Greece. We too borrow billions a day to stay afloat. We too have staggering deficits, which can never be repaid. Heed the dire rhetoric of European leaders.

“The euro is in danger,” German Chancellor Angela Merkel [told lawmakers](#) last week as she called on them to approve Germany's portion of the bailout plan. “If we do not avert this danger, then the consequences for Europe are incalculable, and then the consequences beyond Europe are incalculable.”

Beyond Europe means us. The right-wing government of Kostas Karamanlis, which preceded the current government of George Papandreou, did what the Republicans did under George W. Bush. They looted taxpayer funds to enrich their corporate masters and bankrupt the country. They stole hundreds of millions of dollars from individual retirement and pension accounts slowly built up over years by citizens who had been honest and industrious. They used mass propaganda to make the population afraid of terrorists and surrender civil liberties, including habeas corpus. And while Bush and Karamanlis, along with the corporate criminal class they abetted, live in unparalleled luxury, ordinary working men and women are told they must endure even more pain and suffering to make amends. It is feudal rape. And there has to be a point when even the American public—which still believes the fairy tale that personal will power and positive thinking will lead to success—will realize it has been had.

We have seen these austerity measures before. Latin Americans, like the Russians, were forced by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to gut social services, end subsidies on basic goods and food, and decimate the income levels of the middle class—the foundation of democracy—in the name of fiscal responsibility. Small entrepreneurs, especially farmers, were wiped out. State industries were sold off by corrupt government officials to capitalists for a fraction of their value. Utilities and state services were privatized.

What is happening in Greece, what will happen in Spain and Portugal, what is starting to happen here in states such as California, is the work of a global, white-collar criminal class. No government, including our own, will defy them. It is up to us. Barack Obama is simply the latest face that masks the corporate state. His administration serves corporate interests, not ours. Obama, like Goldman Sachs or Citibank, does not want the public to see how the Federal Reserve Bank acts as a

private account and ATM machine for Wall Street at our expense. He, too, has helped orchestrate the largest transference of wealth upward in American history. He serves our imperial wars, refuses to restore civil liberties, and has not tamed our crippling deficits. His administration gutted regulatory agencies that permitted BP to turn the Gulf of Mexico into a toxic swamp. The refusal of Obama to intervene in a meaningful way to save the gulf's ecosystem and curtail the abuses of the natural gas and oil corporations is not an accident. He knows where power lies. BP and its employees handed more than \$3.5 million to federal candidates over the past 20 years, with the largest chunk of their money going to Obama, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

We are facing the collapse of the world's financial system. It is the end of globalization. And in these final moments the rich are trying to get all they can while there is still time. The fusion of corporatism, militarism and internal and external intelligence agencies—much of their work done by private contractors—has given these corporations terrifying mechanisms of control. Think of it, as the Greeks do, as a species of foreign occupation. Think of the Greek riots as a struggle for liberation.

[Dwight Macdonald](#) laid out the consequences of a culture such as ours, where the waging of war was “the normal mode of existence.” The concept of perpetual war, which eluded the theorists behind the 19th and early 20th century reform and social movements, including Karl Marx, has left social reformers unable to deal with this effective mechanism of mass control. The old reformists had limited their focus to internal class struggle and, as Macdonald noted, never worked out “an adequate theory of the political significance of war.” Until that gap is filled, Macdonald warned, “modern socialism will continue to have a somewhat academic flavor.”

Macdonald detailed in his 1946 essay “The Root Is Man” the marriage between capitalism and permanent war. He despaired of an effective resistance until the permanent war economy, and the mentality that went with it, was defeated. Macdonald, who was an anarchist, saw that the Marxists and the liberal class in Western democracies had both mistakenly placed their faith for human progress in the goodness of the state. This faith, he noted, was a huge error. The state, whether in the capitalist United States or the communist Soviet Union, eventually devoured its children. And it did this by using the organs of mass propaganda to keep its populations afraid and in a state of endless war. It did this by insisting that human beings be sacrificed before the sacred idol of the market or the utopian worker's paradise. The war state provides a constant stream of enemies, whether the German Hun, the Bolshevik, the Nazi, the Soviet agent or the Islamic terrorist. Fear and war, Macdonald understood, was the mechanism that let oligarchs pillage in the name of national security.

“Modern totalitarianism can integrate the masses so completely into the political structure, through terror and propaganda, that they become the architects of their own enslavement,” he wrote. “This does not make the slavery less, but on the contrary more—a paradox there is no space to unravel here. Bureaucratic collectivism, not capitalism, is the most dangerous future enemy of socialism.”

Macdonald argued that democratic states had to dismantle the permanent war economy and the propaganda that came with it. They had to act and govern according to the non-historical and more esoteric values of truth, justice, equality and empathy. Our liberal class, from the church and the university to the press and the Democratic Party, by paying homage to the practical dictates required by hollow statecraft and legislation, has lost its moral voice. Liberals serve false gods. The belief in progress through war, science, technology and consumption has been used to justify the trampling of these non-historical values. And the blind acceptance of the dictates of globalization, the tragic and false belief that globalization is a form of inevitable progress, is perhaps the quintessential illustration of Macdonald's point. The choice is not between the needs of the market and human beings. There should be no choice. And until we break free from serving the fiction of human progress, whether that comes in the form of corporate capitalism or any other utopian vision, we will continue to emasculate ourselves and perpetuate needless human misery. As the crowds of strikers in Athens understand, it is not the banks that are important but the people who raise children, build communities and sustain life. And when a government forgets whom it serves and why it exists, it must be replaced.

“The Progressive makes History the center of his ideology,” Macdonald wrote in “The Root Is Man.” “The Radical puts Man there. The Progressive's attitude is optimistic both about human nature (which he thinks is good, hence all that is needed is to change institutions so as to give this goodness a chance to work) and about the possibility of understanding history through scientific method. The Radical is, if not exactly pessimistic, at least more sensitive to the dual nature; he is

skeptical about the ability of science to explain things beyond a certain point; he is aware of the tragic element in man's fate not only today but in any collective terms (the interests of Society or the Working Class); the Radical stresses the individual conscience and sensibility. The Progressive starts off from what is actually happening; the Radical starts off from what he wants to happen. The former must have the feeling that History is 'on his side.' The latter goes along the road pointed out by his own individual conscience; if History is going his way, too, he is pleased; but he is quite stubborn about following 'what ought to be' rather than 'what is.'"

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [1:35 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

[Les Leopold: Kiss Your Middle Cl..ass Good-bye?](#)

Kiss Your Middle Cl..ass Good-bye?

By Les Leopold [article link](#)

May 21, 2010 | AlterNet

Wake up Congress! The financial reform bill you just passed won't protect us from economic chaos. Why? Because it fails to burst the mother of all bubbles — Wall Street itself.

Our outsized financial sector is a clear and present danger to all of us. This gigantic bubble, which bankers and politicians have been pumping up for the past 30 years, now casts a dark shadow over our economy and our political system. It has distorted our distribution of wealth, making a few people obscenely rich while shrinking what's left of the middle class.

The financial industry bubble started expanding during the 1970s with the push for deregulation. It grew even faster in the 1980s after Reagan and Congress dramatically cut taxes on the super-rich. The wealthy had to do something with their excess money, so they turned to financial gambling. Wall Street grew and grew, rising from about 7 percent of all corporate profits after WWII to more than 30 percent today. Financial executives got exceedingly rich. As Simon Johnson and James Kwak point out in *13 Bankers*, "From 1948 until 1979, average compensation in the banking sector was essentially the same as in the private sector overall; then it shot upward...until in 2007 the average bank employee earned twice as much as the average private sector worker."

As I noted in my book [The Looting of America](#), the ratio of compensation of the top 100 CEOs to the average worker shot up from 45 to 1 in 1970 to a whopping 1,723 in 2006. Did the execs — and the financial execs in particular — get that much smarter than the rest of us?

In a way they did. They got smarter at siphoning off the wealth from our economy while adding little to it. They learned how to leverage gigantic financial bonuses for themselves. And when their financial house of cards collapsed in 2008, they figured out how to get Congress to hand over more than \$8 trillion in cash, asset guarantees and cheap federal loan facilities, a vast taxpayer-financed bailout. And so, just two years later, the Wall Street bubble is once again inflating — and gobbling up our nation's wealth.

This week's chilling Los Angeles Times article on our anemic recovery ("[Consumer spending trend is a shaky foundation for economic recovery](#)") reveals the contours of our bubble economy:

Much of the new spending has come not from America's broad middle class but from a small slice of affluent people at the top....

What's more, some analysts calculate that another big chunk of the recent spending spurt has come from an even shakier source — delinquent homeowners who have more cash in their pockets because they've stopped making mortgage payments now that their houses are worth less than the loan amounts.

So apparently our economy is being rescued by 1) some of the same “affluent” people who caused the crash in the first place — and then benefited from a bailout financed by middle-class taxpayers; and 2) victims of the housing crash, who are now walking away from their homes with a few dollars in their pockets.

This week we learned that home foreclosures have reached a record high. Maybe we should break out the champagne, since our economy is apparently depending on these folks.

The Wall Street bubble and our pathetic recovery are the result of having forgotten everything we learned during the Great Depression. If we want a strong middle class society, we’ve got to impose steep income taxes on the super-rich and tightly constrain the financial sector. We’re not doing either of these things, and so we’re looking at a future of economic chaos.

It’s obvious why most Congress members choose to ignore the biggest bubble of all. Too many politicians rely on financial industry contributions to win office. Too many want jobs on Wall Street once they leave office. Most just don’t have the guts to take on the financial elites.

So how do we puncture the bubble and save our economy? In theory it’s not very hard. But in practice it will take a mass movement that aims at the right targets.

1. Break up the top twenty banks that are too big too fail. Entities like JP Morgan Chase, CitiGroup and Goldman Sachs are a danger to our democracy. Together these 20 big banks constitute an oligopoly with a stranglehold on our economy. They stifle competition and fix prices, they gamble against their clients, they siphon off our economic wealth. Perhaps most critically, they control economic policy. Today, the question on nearly every politician’s lips is, “How will the markets react?” Is that democracy?

2. Institute a financial transaction tax. You would think watching the Dow drop 1,000 points in a hour might create an “aha” moment for our leaders. If not, all they had to do is read the New York Times piece describing the life and times of high-speed traders. These people account for 40 to 60 percent of the volume in the stock market, making billions of trades each day. How long do they hold what they buy? No more than 11 seconds. No joke.

The big banking houses are into this game. When pressed they insist that high-speed trading is great because it brings “liquidity” into the market. But who really needs this liquidity? Certainly not your average mom and pop trader. Big bankers like fast trading and “liquidity” because it allows them to siphon even more of investors’ money into their pockets. What do we do to stop this vast flow of money to the ultra rich? Put a very small tax on each and every financial trade. The tax could exempt a certain amount so that it targets big bankers and fast traders, not any individual mom and pop traders who are still left in the market. Will it unemploy some day traders? It might. But perhaps our day traders should put their magnificent skills to work in the real economy — by, say, teaching people math and computer science. (Well maybe not, since the Wall Street-caused fiscal crisis is leading to tens of thousands of teacher lay-offs.) A financial transaction tax could generate about \$100 billion a year to help fund or stimulate job creation and/or reduce our deficits. Why don’t we hear the deficit hawks screeching about this?

3. Pass a windfall profit tax of 75 percent on Wall Street bonuses and hedge fund incomes (no matter how the money is packaged and laundered). Wouldn’t just about any regular American like this idea? We bailed out Wall Street, and they used the money to pay themselves more than \$150 billion in bonuses. And now, we want our money back. Does anyone really think that that the top 25 hedge fund managers who waltzed off with \$25 billion last year actually deserve all that money? Can anyone think they’re worth as much as 658,000 entry-level teachers?

4. Raise the marginal tax rate on those earning \$3 million or more per year to 70 percent. (This is quite conservative. The rate was 91 percent under the communistic Eisenhower administration.) If anyone has any real evidence, not faith-based theory, that multimillionaires — or our economy — would suffer under such a tax, please let me know. I haven’t seen it. Financial columnists like Andrew Ross Sorkin seem enthralled by the capacity of rich people and their fancy lawyers to circumvent such taxes and fees. Yes, they will find ways around stiff taxes, and yes, they are very clever. But where’s our outrage? Instead of admiring the sly tax evaders who buy congress members and capture regulators, we should be calling them on the carpet. They are not adding to the nation’s wealth, they are looting it.

5. Ban the sale of complex derivatives to all public entities and pension funds and ban public and pension investments in hedge funds. Congress may or may not succeed in passing new rules to curb dangerous derivatives and to bring a bit more transparency and controls to some of these instruments. But it's a crime against humanity to allow any Wall Street firm to foist complex derivatives on public entities and pension funds.

When I wrote about how predatory bankers were ripping off five Wisconsin school districts, many readers argued that the school officials themselves were to blame — they should have known better. Now Capital News Service is reporting that public entities and pensions funds in at least 16 states are facing losses that may amount to over \$25 billion. Wall Street got the fees, and the public got ripped off. Afterwards, we bailed out Wall Street, but not its victims. Just another case of public money being used to pump up the Wall Street bubble. A ban is the easiest way to bust this part of the bubble.

So who's going to make sure we bust the mother of all bubbles? Nobody but us, the American people. The battle is just beginning. As Bob Kuttner points out (Presidency in Peril), it took at least seven years — and a lot of public pressure — for the New Deal to succeed in reforming the financial industry and taxing the super-rich. We are only in Year 2 of our meltdown. The financial elites are hanging on for now, but the American people are wising up to their scams and are hungry for retribution.

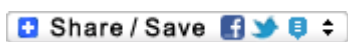
They are also hungry for jobs. And that is the key to our economic conundrum: Consumer spending by the wealthy and by people who have abandoned their mortgages cannot possibly create the 22 million new jobs we need to get near full employment. We need to build a vibrant, sustainable economy with a big middle class — and we can't do that as long as Wall Street keeps siphoning away our wealth.

Right now the Tea Party is capturing much of people's frustration and anger. Unfortunately, the Tea Party's program of cutting taxes and attacking government regulations is a bad joke when it comes to Wall Street. It will only make it easier for the financial sector to inflate itself and further deflate the middle class. If we're going to save ourselves, our families and our country from the ever expanding Wall Street bubble, the rest of us are going to have to get active and soon.

Pass out the pins.

Les Leopold is the author of [The Looting of America: How Wall Street's Game of Fantasy Finance destroyed our Jobs, Pensions and Prosperity, and What We Can Do About It](#) Chelsea Green Publishing, June 2009.

AlterNet [home page](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [1:29 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, May 21, 2010

Gregory Vickrey: Environmentalism is Dead

"This. Is. Serious."

Environmentalism is Dead

By Gregory Vickrey [article link](#)

Weekend Edition May 21 - 23, 2010 | CounterPunch

Another tragedy befalls the environment and we can count on those that were once environmentalists to capitalize, figuratively and literally. As you read, perhaps a 1000 or so organizations are happily signing (or being bribed to sign) yet another refined letter to President Obama, praising his efforts to date and encouraging 'change'. With stellar coordination, you witness the appeals via email from these faux-enviros that clearly state how you can save the sea turtles, or protect the shrimp, or rid us of our reliance on oil by donating today.

This particular letter in circulation is about climate change, and is directly tied to the Gulf of Mexico in its appeal. As it stands, responsibility for pushing the letter lies with the minions at The Nature Conservancy (TNC), National Wildlife Federation (NWF), Repower America aka the Climate Protection Action Fund aka The Alliance For Climate Protection (RA), and a few others.

The letter begins with 'applause', as one would expect. Continue reading, and, apparently, President Obama has done an amazing job prioritizing clean energy, solving the climate crisis, enacting fuel efficiency standards that are defining a new paradigm for vehicular motion, and hitting all the right buttons at the Environmental Protection Agency. Who knew?

One can naturally assume The Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, and Repower America know. And with a thousand or so other signatures on yet another letter driven by the same old set of corporate enviros, the rest of us know something as well.

Environmentalism is dead.

In its place we have the notions of 'pragmatic solutions' and 'noncontroversial approaches' to appreciate.

Such words of discourse come from The Nature Conservancy itself. It is a disgrace to ecosystems everywhere and the next seven generations that they pimp nature dot org as their official website. A quick look-see into the world of TNC and comprehension dawns. Their corporate partners in environmental crime and shame:

3M Company
Alliant Energy
Altria Group
American Electric Power
Bank of America
Barrick Gold Corporation
The Boeing Company
BP
Cargill
Caterpillar Inc.
Chevron
The Coca-Cola Company
Delta Air Lines
The Dow Chemical Company
Duke Energy Corporation
Eastman Kodak Company
Ecolab Inc.
ExxonMobil Corporation
MeadWestvaco Corporation
Monsanto Company
Nestlé Waters North America
PG&E Corporation
Plum Creek Timber Company
SC Johnson & Son, Inc.
Temple-Inland
Weyerhaeuser Company
Xerox Corporation

Scratching your temple?

It is difficult to tell which organization was the most influential in writing the letter to President Obama, but it reads with the gimmickry of a Karl Rove production. Examining information about the National Wildlife Federation makes one

consider that they, NWF, may have been the lead, considering they take donations from the likes of the US Environmental Protection Agency, the US Department of Defense, The Boeing Company, Walt Disney Company, and on, and on, and on. Care to visit with a Wolfowitz at a fundraiser? Throw a few thousand at NWF.

The mathematics of connection get simpler, even as the names get more complicated, with Repower America aka blah blah and blah. The CEO of National Wildlife Federation is on the board at RA. Repower America prostitutes itself with absurdity while dancing with John Kerry, Joe Lieberman, and Lindsey Graham - the "authors" of some pile of papers related to some charade about some climate (shout out to NRDC!) that will serve no useful purpose other than to keep the timber industry viable. Seeking relevance, Al Gore may be seen here at RA when he is not serving in his role at Apple Computer, Inc. of child-labor/sweatshop city fame. Repower America is also blessed with the presence of Joseph Stiglitz, a former Vice President at that most prestigious of entities, the World Bank.

To quote a Wonder Pet, "This. Is. Serious."

Environmentalism is dead. It has been co-opted and corrupted to the point of absolute strangulation, and what remains of the corpse is being devoured rapaciously by the necrophiliacs at your favorite corporate-controlled big enviro - yes, the list of cannibals is much longer than The Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, and Repower America, and the responsibility lies with those not herein named to prove themselves worthy candidates for resurrection as organizations willing to serve the next seven generations instead of the next seven figures.

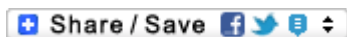
Without environmentalism, there are no environmentalists.

We must save ourselves and our planet as humans.

Gregory Vickrey is a consultant in the nonprofit and political arenas and may be reached at gregory@gregoryvickrey.com.

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:05 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Ted Rall: Nationalize BP and Other Criminal Corporations

Nationalize BP and Other Criminal Corporations

by Ted Rall [article link](#)

May 20, 2010 | CommonDreams

The Supreme Court says that corporations have the same rights as individuals. When they misbehave, shouldn't they face consequences as serious as those imposed upon an individual?

It goes without saying that a person who commits a crime ought to face punishment proportional to the offense. Large and midsize corporations, which employ thousands of employees, have far vaster reach and power than even the wealthiest ordinary citizens. So their crimes can be breathtaking in scope. The 1984 industrial catastrophe at a pesticide plant in Bhopal, India killed 15,000 people. An additional 200,000 have since suffered serious injuries. Compared to the boards of directors of Union Carbide and Dow Chemical, which bought the company in 2001, Ted Bundy was small potatoes.

Unlike small-time serial killers, however, corporations get away with murder. For at least a year, management of the Toyota auto company knew that brakes in millions of its cars might fail. A 2009 ABC News investigation found that at least 16 people had died. "Safety analysts found an estimated 2000 cases in which owners of Toyota cars including Camry, Prius and Lexus, reported that their cars surged without warning up to speeds of 100 miles per hour," reported the network. Yet Toyota did nothing. Instead they blamed their customers, saying they were resting their floormats on the gas pedals.

On May 18th, Toyota finally faced the wrath of the federal government. Its "punishment": a paltry \$16.5 million fine, not one cent of which went to the victims or their families. The fine, which amounted to a ridiculous 5.5 percent of its 2009 profit, went into the U.S. Treasury's general fund--in other words, to kill Afghans and Iraqis.

Available to Congress and the President is a far more appropriate punishment: nationalization without compensation. Toyota's American operations ought to be seized and operated by the federal government. The top officials of the parent company in Japan, whose willful negligence murdered at least 16 American citizens, ought to be extradited and face trial in U.S. federal court.

Extreme? Expropriating private property is commonplace--when the target is Joe and Jane Sixpack. Just ask hundreds of homeowners of New London, Connecticut. When the city destroyed an entire neighborhood to build a luxury office development, the U.S. Supreme Court backed them up, radically expanding the concept of eminent domain. Unlike a lot of evil corporations, those homeowners didn't do anything wrong.

The U.S. government has not only the right but the duty to take over criminal corporations.

A 5.5 percent fine is a slap on the wrist. Nationalizing a company, on the other hand, protects the public interest. Hitting corporations in the balance sheet is a genuine deterrent to the managers of other companies contemplating lawless behavior. It brings in significant cash assets that can be used to compensate the victims of the company's criminal activities.

Nationalization can also serve the interest of public safety. The mine explosion that left at least 25 coal miners dead in West Virginia earlier this year left members of the public feeling helpless and frustrated at the slow and inept rescue attempt by Massey Energy, the site's owner and operator. Setting aside the obvious argument that natural resources ought to be exploited for the benefit of the American people rather than private businesspeople, the rescue operation would have benefited from the involvement of top experts at such government agencies as the Army Corps of Engineers.

In 2009 the Upper Big Branch mine received 450 safety violations. Massey Energy paid the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration less than \$1 million total. That's less than one percent of its annual profits. That's roughly \$2,000 per violation.

If you get caught speeding in Virginia, you'll pay more than what Massey Energy pays for deliberately risking the lives of its employees.

British Petroleum is spending \$6 million a day on its response to the explosion at its Deepwater Horizon oil drilling platform in the Gulf of Mexico. But that's a drop in the bucket next to the cost that will be borne by the people of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. The disaster is spilling the equivalent of one Exxon Valdez wreck into the Gulf every four days--and it's been three weeks. Thousands of fishermen will be ruined. The tourism industry, already in trouble due to the economic collapse, will be devastated. The full extent of the ecological damage--dead animals and aquatic plants, huge dead zones devoid of oxygen--won't be understood for years.

BP failed to ensure that a "blowout preventer" at the Deepwater Horizon would work in the event of an emergency. But their real crime was drilling for oil 5,000 feet down in the first place.

Here again, it's easy to see how nationalization might help. Rather than wait for the clueless execs at BP to come up with a solution, a BP seized by the federal government (its American operations, anyway) would come under the jurisdiction of an organization that could assign experts from NOAA and the U.S. Navy, among other agencies, to stop the leak. After the leak is plugged, the publicly-owned former BP's profits would help defray the costs of the cleanup and extend benefits to fisherman and other victims.

Imagine the possibilities. What if Too Big to Fail had been turned into Too Big to Resist?

As a nationalized asset Citibank, which received \$306 billion in bailouts, would be worth \$152 trillion to taxpayers. Goldman Sachs got \$15 billion; they're worth \$70 trillion. Sell them off and no one would ever pay college tuition again.

Or to see a doctor. Or we could give everyone a 50 percent tax cut. We're a rich country--the problem is that out-of-control corporations are hogging the wealth.

Businessmen charter corporations for the express purpose of avoiding individual legal liability. Isn't it high time we started holding criminal businessmen accountable?

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Ted Rall is the author of the new book "[Silk Road to Ruin: Is Central Asia the New Middle East?](#)," an in-depth prose and graphic novel analysis of America's next big foreign policy challenge.

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Gulf Oil Disaster: A Transatlantic Pollution Catastrophe Looms

by Finian Cunningham [article link](#)

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By Daniel J. Weiss [article link](#)

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Thursday, May 20, 2010

The Corporate As Synthetic God: May God Forgive Us

PRESS RELEASE

First Self-Replicating Synthetic Bacterial Cell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE [article link](#)

20-May-2010

First Self-Replicating, Synthetic Bacterial Cell Constructed by J. Craig Venter Institute Researchers

ROCKVILLE, MD and San Diego, CA (May 20, 2010)— Researchers at the J. Craig Venter Institute (JCVI), a not-for-profit genomic research organization, published results today describing the successful construction of the first self-replicating, synthetic bacterial cell. The team synthesized the 1.08 million base pair chromosome of a modified *Mycoplasma mycoides* genome. The synthetic cell is called *Mycoplasma mycoides* JCVI-syn1.0 and is the proof of principle that genomes can be designed in the computer, chemically made in the laboratory and transplanted into a recipient cell to produce a new self-replicating cell controlled only by the synthetic genome.

This research will be published by Daniel Gibson et al in the May 20th edition of Science Express and will appear in an upcoming print issue of Science.

“For nearly 15 years Ham Smith, Clyde Hutchison and the rest of our team have been working toward this publication today--the successful completion of our work to construct a bacterial cell that is fully controlled by a synthetic genome,” said J. Craig Venter, Ph.D., founder and president, JCVI and senior author on the paper. “We have been consumed by this research, but we have also been equally focused on addressing the societal implications of what we believe will be one of the most powerful technologies and industrial drivers for societal good. We look forward to continued review and dialogue about the important applications of this work to ensure that it is used for the benefit of all.”

According to Dr. Smith, “With this first synthetic bacterial cell and the new tools and technologies we developed to successfully complete this project, we now have the means to dissect the genetic instruction set of a bacterial cell to see and understand how it really works.”

To complete this final stage in the nearly 15 year process to construct and boot up a synthetic cell, JCVI scientists began with the accurate, digitized genome of the bacterium, *M. mycoides*. The team designed 1,078 specific cassettes of DNA that were 1,080 base pairs long. These cassettes were designed so that the ends of each DNA cassette overlapped each of its neighbors by 80bp. The cassettes were made according to JCVI’s specifications by the DNA synthesis company, Blue Heron Biotechnology.

The JCVI team employed a three stage process using their previously described yeast assembly system to build the genome using the 1,078 cassettes. The first stage involved taking 10 cassettes of DNA at a time to build 110, 10,000 bp segments. In the second stage, these 10,000 bp segments are taken 10 at a time to produce eleven, 100,000 bp segments. In the final step, all 11, 100 kb segments were assembled into the complete synthetic genome in yeast cells and grown as a yeast artificial chromosome.

The complete synthetic *M. mycoides* genome was isolated from the yeast cell and transplanted into *Mycoplasma capricolum* recipient cells that have had the genes for its restriction enzyme removed. The synthetic genome DNA was transcribed into messenger RNA, which in turn was translated into new proteins. The *M. capricolum* genome was either destroyed by *M. mycoides* restriction enzymes or was lost during cell replication. After two days viable *M. mycoides* cells, which contained only synthetic DNA, were clearly visible on petri dishes containing bacterial growth medium.

The initial synthesis of the synthetic genome did not result in any viable cells so the JCVI team developed an error correction method to test that each cassette they constructed was biologically functional. They did this by using a combination of 100 kb natural and synthetic segments of DNA to produce semi-synthetic genomes. This approach allowed

for the testing of each synthetic segment in combination with 10 natural segments for their capacity to be transplanted and form new cells. Ten out of 11 synthetic fragments resulted in viable cells; therefore the team narrowed the issue down to a single 100 kb cassette. DNA sequencing revealed that a single base pair deletion in an essential gene was responsible for the unsuccessful transplants. Once this one base pair error was corrected, the first viable synthetic cell was produced.

Dr. Gibson stated, “To produce a synthetic cell, our group had to learn how to sequence, synthesize, and transplant genomes. Many hurdles had to be overcome, but we are now able to combine all of these steps to produce synthetic cells in the laboratory.” He added, “We can now begin working on our ultimate objective of synthesizing a minimal cell containing only the genes necessary to sustain life in its simplest form. This will help us better understand how cells work.”

This publication represents the construction of the largest synthetic molecule of a defined structure; the genome is almost double the size of the previous *Mycoplasma genitalium* synthesis. With this successful proof of principle, the group will now work on creating a minimal genome, which has been a goal since 1995. They will do this by whittling away at the synthetic genome and repeating transplantation experiments until no more genes can be disrupted and the genome is as small as possible. This minimal cell will be a platform for analyzing the function of every essential gene in a cell.

According to Dr. Hutchison, “To me the most remarkable thing about our synthetic cell is that its genome was designed in the computer and brought to life through chemical synthesis, without using any pieces of natural DNA. This involved developing many new and useful methods along the way. We have assembled an amazing group of scientists that have made this possible.”

As in the team’s 2008 publication in which they described the successful synthesis of the *M. genitalium* genome, they designed and inserted into the genome what they called watermarks. These are specifically designed segments of DNA that use the “alphabet” of genes and proteins that enable the researcher to spell out words and phrases. The watermarks are an essential means to prove that the genome is synthetic and not native, and to identify the laboratory of origin. Encoded in the watermarks is a new DNA code for writing words, sentences and numbers. In addition to the new code there is a web address to send emails to if you can successfully decode the new code, the names of 46 authors and other key contributors and three quotations: "TO LIVE, TO ERR, TO FALL, TO TRIUMPH, TO RECREATE LIFE OUT OF LIFE." - JAMES JOYCE; "SEE THINGS NOT AS THEY ARE, BUT AS THEY MIGHT BE." - A quote from the book, “American Prometheus”; "WHAT I CANNOT BUILD, I CANNOT UNDERSTAND." - RICHARD FEYNMAN.

The JCVI scientists envision that the knowledge gained by constructing this first self-replicating synthetic cell, coupled with decreasing costs for DNA synthesis, will give rise to wider use of this powerful technology. This will undoubtedly lead to the development of many important applications and products including biofuels, vaccines, pharmaceuticals, clean water and food products. The group continues to drive and support ethical discussion and review to ensure a positive outcome for society.

Funding for this research came from Synthetic Genomics Inc., a company co-founded by Drs. Venter and Smith.

Background

The research published today was made possible by previous breakthroughs at JCVI. In 2007 the team published results from the transplantation of the native *M. mycoides* genome into the *M. capricolum* cell which resulted in the *M. capricolum* cell being transformed into *M. mycoides*. This work established the notion that DNA is the software of life and that DNA dictates the cell phenotype.

In 2008 the same team reported on the construction of the first synthetic bacterial genome by assembling DNA fragments made from the four chemicals of life—ACGT. The final assembly of DNA fragments into the whole genome was performed in yeast by making use of the yeast genetic systems. However, when the team attempted to transplant the synthetic bacterial genome out of yeast and into a recipient bacterial cell, viable transplants could not be recovered.

Ethical Considerations: Since the beginning of the quest to understand and build a synthetic genome, Dr. Venter and his team have been concerned with the societal issues surrounding the work. In 1995 while the team was doing the research on

the minimal genome, the work underwent significant ethical review by a panel of experts at the University of Pennsylvania (Cho et al, Science December 1999:Vol. 286. no. 5447, pp. 2087 – 2090). The bioethical group's independent deliberations, published at the same time as the scientific minimal genome research, resulted in a unanimous decision that there were no strong ethical reasons why the work should not continue as long as the scientists involved continued to engage public discussion.

Dr. Venter and the team at JCVI continue to work with bioethicists, outside policy groups, legislative members and staff, and the public to encourage discussion and understanding about the societal implications of their work and the field of synthetic genomics generally. As such, the JCVI's policy team, along with the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), were funded by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for a 20-month study that explored the risks and benefits of this emerging technology, as well as possible safeguards to prevent abuse, including bioterrorism. After several workshops and public sessions the group published a report in October 2007 outlining options for the field and its researchers.

Most recently in December of 2008, JCVI received funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to examine ethical and societal concerns that are associated with the developing science of synthetic genomics. The ongoing research is intended to inform the scientific community as well as educate our policymakers and journalists so that they may engage in informed discussions on the topic.

About the J. Craig Venter Institute

The JCVI is a not-for-profit research institute in Rockville, MD and La Jolla, CA dedicated to the advancement of the science of genomics; the understanding of its implications for society; and communication of those results to the scientific community, the public, and policymakers. Founded by J. Craig Venter, Ph.D., the JCVI is home to approximately 400 scientists and staff with expertise in human and evolutionary biology, genetics, bioinformatics/informatics, information technology, high-throughput DNA sequencing, genomic and environmental policy research, and public education in science and science policy. The legacy organizations of the JCVI are: The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR), The Center for the Advancement of Genomics (TCAG), the Institute for Biological Energy Alternatives (IBEA), the Joint Technology Center (JTC), and the J. Craig Venter Science Foundation. The JCVI is a 501 (c) (3) organization. For additional information, please visit <http://www.JCVI.org>. Media Contact: Heather Kowalski, 301-943-8879, [hkwalski\(AT\)jcv.org](mailto:hkowalski(AT)jcv.org)

'Artificial life' breakthrough announced by scientists

By Victoria Gill [article link](#)

20 May 2010 | Science reporter, BBC News

BBC News [front page](#)

'New industrial revolution'

Dr Venter and his colleagues hope eventually to design and build new bacteria that will perform useful functions.

"I think they're going to potentially create a new industrial revolution," he said.

"If we can really get cells to do the production that we want, they could help wean us off oil and reverse some of the damage to the environment by capturing carbon dioxide."

Dr Venter and his colleagues are already collaborating with pharmaceutical and fuel companies to design and develop chromosomes for bacteria that would produce useful fuels and new vaccines.

But critics say that the potential benefits of synthetic organisms have been overstated.

Dr Helen Wallace from [Genewatch UK](#), an organisation that monitors developments in genetic technologies, told BBC News that synthetic bacteria could be dangerous.

"If you release new organisms into the environment, you can do more harm than good," she said.

"By releasing them into areas of pollution, [with the aim of cleaning it up], you're actually releasing a new kind of pollution.

"We don't know how these organisms will behave in the environment."

Dr Wallace accused Dr Venter of playing down the potential drawbacks.

"He isn't God," she said, "he's actually being very human; trying to get money invested in his technology and avoid regulation that would restrict its use."

But Dr Venter said that he was "driving the discussions" about the regulations governing this relatively new scientific field and about the ethical implications of the work. ...

... The ethical discussions surrounding the creation of synthetic or artificial life are set to continue.

Professor Julian Savulescu, from the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics at the University of Oxford, said the potential of this science was "in the far future, but real and significant".

"But the risks are also unparalleled," he continued. "We need new standards of safety evaluation for this kind of radical research and protections from military or terrorist misuse and abuse.

"These could be used in the future to make the most powerful bioweapons imaginable. The challenge is to eat the fruit without the worm."

The advance did not pose a danger in the form of bio-terrorism, Dr Venter said.

"That was reviewed extensively in the US in a report from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and a Washington defence think tank, indicating that there were very small new dangers from this.

"Most people are in agreement that there is a slight increase in the potential for harm. But there's an exponential increase in the potential benefit to society," he told BBC's Newsnight.

"The flu vaccine you'll get next year could be developed by these processes," he added.

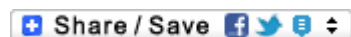
WATTS WHAT...

Assessing the impact of Venter's 'synthetic life'

by Susan Watts [blog link](#)

20 May 2010 | BBC Newsnight Science Editor

Susan Watts [blog home](#)

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John Pilger: The Heresy of the Greeks Offers Hope

The Heresy of the Greeks Offers Hope

Grotesque Global Financial System: Greece. Economic Theft on an Unprecedented Scale

Greece is a microcosm of a modern class war rarely reported as such.

by John Pilger [article link](#) [article link](#)

May 20, 2010 | [truthout](#) | [Global Research](#)

As Britain's political class pretends that its arranged marriage of Tweedledee to Tweedledum is democracy, the inspiration for the rest of us is Greece. It is hardly surprising that Greece is presented not as a beacon, but as a "junk country" getting its comeuppance for its "bloated public sector" and "culture of cutting corners" (Observer). The heresy of Greece is that the uprising of its ordinary people provides an authentic hope unlike that lavished upon the warlord in the White House.

The crisis that has led to Greece's "rescue" by European banks and the International Monetary Fund is the product of a grotesque financial system that itself is in crisis. Greece is a microcosm of a modern class war rarely reported as such, but waged with all the urgency of panic among the imperial rich.

What makes Greece different is that it has experienced, within living memory, invasion, foreign occupation, military dictatorship and popular resistance. Ordinary people are not cowed by the corrupt corporatism that dominates the European Union. The right-wing government of Kostas Karamanlis that preceded the present Pasok (Labour) government of George Papandreou was described by the sociologist Jean Ziegler as "a machine for systematically pillaging the country's resources".

Epic theft

The machine had infamous friends. The US Federal Reserve board is investigating the role of Goldman Sachs, which gambled on the bankruptcy of Greece as public assets were sold off and its tax-evading rich deposited €360bn in Swiss banks. This haemorrhaging of capital continues with the approval of Europe's central banks and governments.

At 11 per cent, Greece's budget deficit is no higher than America's. However, when the Papandreou government tried to borrow on the international capital market, it was effectively blocked by the US corporate ratings agencies, which "downgraded" Greek debt to "junk". These same agencies gave triple-A ratings to billions of dollars in so-called sub-prime mortgage securities and so precipitated the economic collapse in 2008.

What has happened in Greece is theft on an epic, though not unfamiliar, scale. In Britain, the "rescue" of banks such as Northern Rock and the Royal Bank of Scotland has cost billions of pounds. Thanks to Gordon Brown and his passion for the avaricious instincts of the City, these gifts of public money were unconditional, and the bankers have continued to pay each other the booty they call bonuses and to spirit it away to tax havens. Under Britain's political monoculture, they can do as they wish. In the US, the situation is even more remarkable. As the investigative journalist David DeGraw has reported, the principal Wall Street banks that "destroyed the economy pay zero in taxes and get \$33bn in refunds".

In Greece, as in America and Britain, the ordinary people have been told they must repay the debts of the rich and powerful who incurred them. Jobs, pensions and public services are to be slashed and burned, with privateers put in charge. For the EU and the IMF, the opportunity presents to "change the culture" and to dismantle the social welfare of Greece, just as the IMF and the World Bank have "structurally adjusted" (impoverished and controlled) countries across the developing world.

Greece is hated for the same reason Yugoslavia had to be destroyed physically behind a pretence of protecting the people of Kosovo. Most Greeks are employed by the state, and the young and the trade unions comprise a popular alliance that has not been pacified; the colonels' tanks on the campus of Athens University in 1967 remain a political spectre. Such resistance is anathema to Europe's central bankers and regarded as an obstruction to German capital's need to capture markets in the aftermath of Germany's troubled reunification.

Shock therapy

In Britain, such has been the 30-year propaganda of an extreme economic theory known first as monetarism, then as neoliberalism, that the new Prime Minister can, like his predecessor, describe his demands that ordinary people pay the debts of crooks as "fiscally responsible". The unmentionables are poverty and class.

Almost a third of British children remain below the breadline. In working-class Kentish Town in London, male life expectancy is 70. Two miles away, in Hampstead, it is 80. When Russia was subjected to similar "shock therapy" in the 1990s, life expectancy nosedived. In the United States, a record 40 million cannot afford to feed themselves.

In the developing world, a system of triage imposed by the World Bank and the IMF has long determined whether people live or die. Whenever tariffs and food and fuel subsidies are eliminated by IMF diktat, small farmers know they have been declared expendable. The World Resources Institute estimates that the toll reaches between 13 and 18 million child deaths every year. This, wrote the economist Lester C Thurow, is "neither metaphor nor simile of war, but war itself".

The same imperial forces have used horrific weapons against stricken countries where children are the majority, and approved torture as an instrument of foreign policy. It is a phenomenon of denial that none of these assaults on humanity, in which Britain is actively engaged, was allowed to intrude on the British election.

The people on the streets of Athens do not suffer this malaise. They are clear who the enemy is and regard themselves as once again under foreign occupation. And once again, they are rising up, with courage. When David Cameron begins to cleave £6bn from public services in Britain, he will be bargaining that Greece will not happen in Britain. We should prove him wrong.

John Pilger, Australian-born, London-based journalist, film-maker and author. For his foreign and war reporting, ranging from Vietnam and Cambodia to the Middle East, he has twice won Britain's highest award for journalism. For his documentary films, he won a British Academy Award and an American Emmy. In 2009, he was awarded Australia's human rights prize, the Sydney Peace Prize. His latest film is The War on Democracy.

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Wednesday, May 19, 2010

[Glen Ford: Remembering Malcolm X](#)

Remembering Malcolm X, champion of democracy, on his 85th birthday

By Glen Ford [article link](#)

May 19, 2010 | The Progressive | Black Agenda report

Malcolm X would be 85 this week, and his life has much to teach us.

Born on May 19, 1925, Malcolm X, perhaps the greatest proponent of democracy in modern Black America, emerged from a secretive, militarized, dictatorial, theocratic sect.

Minister Malcolm X, the public face of the Nation of Islam until his ouster in 1964, was as responsible as any one person for the earthquake that rocked Black America in the '60s.

At the core of Malcolm's black nationalism was the demand for accountability to the black masses from all those who purport to govern or lead them. The people occupy center stage in Malcolm's political drama, while "Negro leadership" jockeys for white favor and financing. Shepherds, as these leaders style themselves, need sheep to stay in business.

Malcolm's public career is an unbroken exhortation that blacks behave, not as sheep, but men and women — foiling both the white oppressor and the black mis-leader.

The 1963 March on Washington was not the brainchild of the "Big Six" black civil rights leadership, said Malcolm in his most famous speech, "Message to the Grassroots." The demand and momentum for change came from the black man and woman in the street, who vowed to descend on the nation's capital "and tie it up, bring it to a halt; don't let the government proceed. They even said they was [sic] going out to the airport and lay down on the runway and don't let no airplanes land. I'm telling you what they said. ... That was the black revolution."

Malcolm's revolutionary black nationalism is people power, pushing back the oppressor and imposing the popular will on collaborationist "leadership." His relentless critique of the "Big Six" — Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer, John Lewis, A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young — freed the black political conversation from the gags of false unity, empowering the rank and file to demand accountability from their "spokesmen."

With Malcolm charging the "Big Six" with cutting deals every time they met with white people behind closed doors, black leaders were forced to at least pretend they were beholden to a mass constituency. Malcolm was the people's surrogate in intra-black politics. He championed the "grassroots" in a black polity dominated by clerics claiming accountability to a "higher" authority and heads of secular organizations largely dependent on "white" subsidies.

Malcolm challenged the very legitimacy of black leadership structures that are unconnected to the lives and expressed aspirations of the masses.

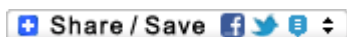
A liberated but doomed El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz spoke for his newly created Organization for Afro-American Unity:

"We declare our right on this earth to be a man, to be a human being, to be respected as a human being, to be given the rights of a human being in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary."

That's a democracy to struggle and die for.

Glen Ford is executive editor of BlackAgendaReport.com
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[Agence France-Presse: Washington Power Sits Uneasily After Vote Backlash](#)

Washington power sits uneasily after vote backlash

By Agence France-Presse [article link](#)

Wednesday, May 19th, 2010 | the raw story

More political bloodletting likely looming in November

Incumbent US lawmakers of all political stripes squirmed uneasily in their seats Wednesday after angry voters in key nominating races delivered a stinging anti-Washington backlash.

Results from Tuesday's primary elections, reflecting voter anger at economic blight, Wall Street bailouts and establishment politicians, suggested more political bloodletting is looming in November's congressional elections.

They also showed that the yearning for change that Barack Obama rode to the White House is not yet sated, and is now matched on the right by the conservative "Tea Party" movement.

While Obama's Democrats have long feared Republicans could loosen their stranglehold on congressional power in November, Tuesday's results also bore ominous signs for the opposition party.

At this volatile moment in US politics, power, of any kind, may be a liability.

In Pennsylvania, veteran Senator Arlen Specter, who switched to the Democrats after concluding he couldn't win a Republican primary, tumbled to defeat to insurgent candidate, Joe Sestak.

In Arkansas, Democrat Senator Blanche Lincoln failed to head off a run-off vote against an opponent branding her a symbol of incumbent complacency.

In Kentucky, Rand Paul, now vying with Sarah Palin for Tea Party hearts, declared Washington "horribly broken" after beating the handpicked candidate of Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell.

Many commentators seized on Paul's triumph as proof of the Tea Party's muscle and the resonance of its low tax, small government, anti-corporate bailout and anti-Obama message.

"It was the perfect storm ... it's the mood of the country and our message being exactly equal to the mood of the country which is: We've got to get our government back," Paul told CNN Wednesday.

In other nominating fights, the Tea Party has also demonstrated its might: in Arizona, long-term incumbent John McCain faces an unexpectedly tough Republican primary fight against a Tea Party favorite J.D. Hayworth.

But while the movement has defied national Republican leaders in primary votes among the most activist voters, its national clout is still in doubt.

In a New York special congressional election in November, a Tea Party revolt put a deeply conservative candidate on the ballot -- but handed a reliably Republican district to Democrats.

"The question is going to be in November -- is the Tea Party big enough to swing elections?" said Bruce Altschuler of the State University of New York, Oswego.

"Does this conservative insurgent movement give the Republicans strong candidates -- or does it allow the Democrats to defeat a more divided Republican Party?"

Whatever the answer, Republican leaders face tough choices as they seek a champion to race Obama for the White House.

"This gives rise to great concern from the Republican Party looking towards 2012," said Bruce Buchanan, of the University of Texas.

"Can they come up with somebody that is centrist enough to win nationally?"

Establishment Democrats may see a silver lining in Specter's loss, even though he was backed by the White House after his party switch.

Sestak may turn out to be a better candidate to take on Republican Pat Toomey, whose conservative bona-fides caused Specter to bolt.

Another bright spot for Democrats: they kept the Pennsylvania House of Representatives fiefdom of the late John Murtha, the kind of rural, conservative seat Republicans must win to take back Congress.

But Murtha's legendary local appeal may mean the result is not representative of countrywide sentiment -- despite White House spin.

Current popular anger also poses problems for Obama.

As the architect of a 787 billion dollar stimulus plan, a huge federal health reform drive and a car industry bailout, he can hardly claim to be a Washington outsider.

But posing as an inside man is also a risk, with suspicion of government running so deep.

In Ohio Tuesday, the president tried to thread the needle -- surrounded by steelworkers in grimy overalls, portraying himself as a man who stood with the people against entrenched political interests.

"Sometimes in Washington, everybody is spending all their time arguing about politics and you lose track of the folks who sent you there in the first place," Obama said.

Polls show that voters revile Washington's partisan bile.

But the nominating process is producing candidates that pander to the grass roots -- and may lead to an even more polarized Congress.

Replacing the moderate Specter with Sestak or Toomey will clearly widen divides between the parties, said Tom Baldino, a politics professor at Wilkes University, Pennsylvania.

"The likelihood of a Congress that is more polarized than the current one is very high."

the raw story [home page](#)

What Explains the Anti-Establishment Sentiment?

by Glenn Greenwald [article link](#) [article link](#)

Wednesday, May 19, 2010 | Salon | CommonDreams

Salon [home page](#)

... It makes perfect sense that the country loathes the political establishment. Just look at its rancid fruits over the past decade: a devastating war justified by weapons that did not exist; a financial crisis that our Nation's Genuises failed to detect and which its elites caused with lawless and piggish greed; elections that seem increasingly irrelevant in terms of how the Government functions; grotesquely lavish rewards for the worst culprits juxtaposed with miserable unemployment and serious risks of having basic entitlements (Social Security) cut for ordinary Americans; and a Congress that continues to be owned, right out in the open, by the very interests that have caused so much damage. The political establishment is rotten to its core, and the only thing that's surprising is that the citizenry's contempt isn't even more intense than it is. But precisely because that dynamic so clearly transcends Left/Right or Democratic/GOP dichotomies, little effort is expended to understand or explain it. ...

Fear Comes of Age

by David Michael Green [article link](#)

Wednesday, May 19, 2010 | CommonDreams

CommonDreams [home page](#)

... So the short version of the story is that the aberration of partial economic justice and democracy that characterized the middle of the twentieth century is collapsing all around us. That implosion has now swallowed up both political parties. It

has long held sway on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. And it is finally being ossified into place for at least the next several decades with lifetime appointments to the Supreme Court. The first priority is to create an all-powerful executive. The second priority is to create an all-powerful state. And the third priority is to make sure that both are put to the service of oligarchic interests. This is the regressive play book, rarely ever seen with greater clarity than in the voting records of the Scalia bloc on the Court. All else is commentary, if not diversion.

The astonishing irony, of course, is that there could hardly be a moment more propitious for an ideological swing in the other direction. People are hurting badly. Elites are vastly richer today than they were three decades ago. The connection between the two, in the form of predatory Wall Street plunderings continually aided, abetted and even funded by the government, is no longer even particularly hidden. And yet there is no left at all on the national horizon, apart from an occasional Bernie Sanders or Dennis Kucinich. Indeed, quite the opposite is the case. All energy is with the blind raging tea party mentality, which only seeks to vastly exacerbate the problem through some sort of vague libertarianism that will further unleash corporate dominance and further shred what little is left of a tattered social safety net in America.

You really have to hand it to the right. They understand mass psychology so much better than progressives do. They know that rationality is the first victim of fear, and that fear breeds upon itself, amplifying its own effects exponentially. They understand how fragile a thing is a thoughtful, sober and responsible democracy, and how readily undermined it can be for nefarious and hidden purposes.

And they understand how easy it is to buy off those with the capacity to prevent a country's political and economic suicide. ...

Message of Tuesday's Elections: F*ck Washington, Obama, DNC, DSCC, GOP, Unions

By Rob Kall [article link](#)

May 18, 2010 | OpEdNews

OpEdNews [home page](#)

The "Mad-As-Hell" Party Scores as the Anxious Class Stews

by: Robert Reich [article link](#)

Tuesday 18 May 2010 | truthout

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Besancenot/Grond: The Greek People are the Victims

The Greek People are the Victims of a Carefully Engineered Financial Extortion Racket

by Olivier Besancenot and Pierre-François Grond [article link](#)

May 19, 2010 | Global Research | Le Monde (original in French) 05-14-10

What is happening in Greece concerns all of us. The people are paying for a crisis and a debt that are not their own. Today it is the Greeks, tomorrow it will be others, for the same causes will produce the same effects if we allow it.

First and above all, we express our full and unconditional solidarity with the people who are suffering from an austerity plan without precedent combined with contempt and an arrogance bordering on racism. The strikes and demonstrations are legitimate, and we support them. This is not the crisis of the Greek people, it is the crisis of the world capitalist system. What the Greek people are experiencing is revealing of today's capitalism. The plan dictated by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rides roughshod over the most elementary rules of democracy.

If this plan is implemented, it will result in a collapse of the economy and of peoples' incomes without precedent in Europe since the 1930s. Equally glaring is the collusion of markets, central banks and governments to make the people pay the bill

for the arbitrary caprice of the system. [French President] Nicolas Sarkozy still dares to talk of the need to regulate the market, although all the measures he implements are more liberal than ever. The movement is accompanied by a deadening consensus of the Right and the Left. The plan is designed by European governments of the Right and Left – and by Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the managing director of the IMF, an institution that has ravaged the Third World for decades and is now attacking Europe. A plan that is implemented by a Socialist government, [Greek Prime Minister] George Papandreou's, the French side of which is adopted by the UMP [Union pour un Mouvement Populaire, a centre-right party] and the SP [Socialist Party of France] members of parliament combined.

Background to the Crisis

The Greek debt crisis is the third tier of a more global crisis that began in the summer of 2008 in the United States. The financial speculation engaged in by the major western banks led the world to the brink of the abyss and plunged the economy into recession. Escalating unemployment, flagging incomes and purchasing power are the principal consequences. Governments have saved this financial capitalism, resuscitated the banks, relaunched capitalism with hundreds of billions of Euros and dollars, thereby causing an explosion in debts and deficits and putting the more fragile states such as Greece in a difficult position.

Now the markets, having digested the crisis, are attacking government debts and speculating on the future of the weakest. What an exemplary lesson on the amorality of a system that is able, in one year, to survive thanks to the IV [intravenous] drip of the state and then to plunge the state itself into a speculative punishment. A speculation that is now embarking on an assault on Spain, while awaiting further victims. When French Prime Minister François Fillon announced May 5 that painful measures were in store to “avoid indebtedness like Greece,” he also announced an austerity plan, one element of which is a reappraisal of the right to retire at age 60.

In fact, a three-year freeze on public spending will entail a freeze on civil servants’ wages and job cutbacks in the hospitals, schools and other public services that people need in order to confront the social catastrophe engendered by the crisis. In contrast, the future is guaranteed for tax expenditures that have generously awarded a thousand or so of the privileged with an average refund of 376,000 Euros apiece.

Double Standards

The Greek measures overwhelmingly approved by the European governments consist of attacking social rights because, under the rules of globalized capitalism applied by these governments, Europe is losing ground in the global competition with the United States and the emerging countries. Their solution is to regain competitiveness through a reappraisal of the standard of living and social protection achieved in Europe by decades of mobilization of the workers movement. An unending spiral toward the bottom. And imagine, they sold us the Maastricht treaties, the European Constitution treaty, and the Lisbon treaty as the premises for the construction of a European social and welfare network! What utter nonsense, when we relate this promise to the bleeding imposed upon the Greeks – at 5% interest, moreover. The European banks can continue to grow rich on the Greek austerity plan, although they are the ones most responsible for the world economic chaos. By the same token, there is nothing humanitarian about voting for an “assistance plan” like that in the National Assembly. By joining in the government decision, the SP lines up on the side of finance and not the oppressed.

The European Union, far from being supportive, knows how to play the usurer on the back of a people’s misery. The common declaration of Mr. Sarkozy and [German Chancellor] Angela Merkel that they will save the Euro zone by reinforcing “budget surveillance” of states failing to adhere to the objectives of the stability pact is an illustration of this. In liberal Europe, governments are allowed to contravene the stability pact only when they are opening the public assistance taps for the banks. Humanity can wait.

Yet, never has there been such urgency to the need for a social, ecological and anticapitalist Europe of solidarity. None of the problems can be met within national borders. We are all Greek workers subject to the same logic. The debt of the governments is the product of twenty-five years of liberalism and the slashes in the taxes of the wealthiest – on corporate incomes, capital and shareholders’ dividends. Twenty-five years of an ongoing decline in the payroll taxes imposed on employers and the well-heeled. This crisis is not ours. In Greece, as elsewhere in Europe, it need not be paid for by us.

Our Demands, Our Alternatives

That is why we demand the cancellation of the Greek debt. To reject the austerity plans, to divest the banks of the control they exercise over the economy and society, to substitute a single European public banking service in place of the European Central Bank, with a monopoly over credit, is to fight for the cancellation of the debts and for a genuine European construction: that of the peoples and the workers, of a convergence of their struggles, for a social and ecological Europe of solidarity. If we do not initiate this about-turn, to build another Europe, the sovereigntist and nationalist logic, with its trail of xenophobia, will get the upper hand. The sprint has begun.

To proceed with the common currency, all liberal governments, Right and Left alike, managed to impose drastic economic convergence criteria. The time has now come to impose some social convergence criteria with a European minimum wage, a right of European workers and their organizations to veto layoffs, and some social and democratic rights based on the most favourable national legislation. Such a project must be led by a new political force reaching beyond national borders, a European anticapitalist left that is built step by step. The entire radical left should give careful thought to the lesson of Greece.

This radical left everywhere faces a hard choice between independence from the Social Democracy or incorporation within a management majority with the liberal left. We all want to fight the Right in Europe, as in France, and that means creating alternative channels, not the programmed “alternance” already baptized in France by the Socialist Party as “Gauche solidaire” – solidarity with the speculators, as in the Greek situation. •

Olivier Besancenot and **Pierre-François Grond** are members of the executive committee of the [Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste \(NPA\)](#) in France. The essay appeared in Le Monde, May 14, 2010.

Translated by Richard Fidler. Published in English by [socialistproject.ca](#)

Resources

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[Statement by Syriza, 2 May 2010](#)

[Initiative for a European-wide “Week of Protest & Solidarity” from Left MEPs, 13 May 2010](#)

[In solidarity with the Greek people’s resistance against austerity, 13 May 2010](#)

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Author: Mac Slavo [article link](#)

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Tuesday, May 18, 2010

Russell D. Longcore: Gulf Oil Spill Disaster: The Trigger of American Economic Collapse?

Gulf Oil Spill Disaster: The Trigger of American Economic Collapse?

by Russell D. Longcore [article link](#)

May 6, 2010 | DumpDC

This article is written to analyze the potential economic fallout of the Gulf of Mexico oil rig explosion that occurred on April 20, 2010. I maintain that this incident could be the trigger of the American economic collapse. My expertise is in the insurance risk management and claims field. So, let's look at what is going to happen as this disaster unfolds over time.

The oil drilling platform that burned and sank was drilling a well about 50 miles off the Louisiana coast. The derrick, the Deepwater Horizon, is owned by Transocean Ltd., and was leased to British Petroleum (BP). It was connected to the ocean floor by a "riser"...a 5,000 foot pipe that is now kinked like a garden hose. But the leaks are at the sea floor, not in the pipe. If BP, the lessee, cannot close the valve at the mile-deep wellhead, they may have to drill another well to relieve pressure. Some experts estimate that it could take two months to cap the well at the mile-deep ocean floor. And every day, somewhere between 1,000 and 5,000 BARRELS (200,000 to 1 million gallons) of crude oil float to the surface of the Gulf of Mexico.

The leading edge of the oil slick is about to make landfall at the Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi coasts. But there exists the possibility that the oil spill may be caught by the Gulf Stream...the powerful, warm, and swift Atlantic Ocean current that originates in the Gulf of Mexico, exits through the Strait of Florida, and follows the eastern coastlines of the United States and Newfoundland before crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

And, we are just about to enter the Hurricane season, which extends from June 1st to November 30th. Any hurricane that enters the Gulf of Mexico will disperse the surface oil to parts unknown. There is no predicting which coastlines could be coated with crude oil. Any Gulf hurricane will impede and stall cleanup efforts as well as vastly expanding the geographic footprint of the spill. Cleanup cost could multiply exponentially.

Could be an active hurricane season. Sea surface temperatures are already above 80 degrees Fahrenheit from West Africa to the Gulf of Mexico (see [Global Sea Surface Temperatures](#)). And warm water spawns hurricanes.

So, we may be witnessing the humble beginnings of a disaster that could potentially affect the American coastline from Texas to Newfoundland.

Insurance Claims Issues

First Party Claims

There will be a flood of first-party claims, which are claims for direct loss or damage to covered property. But most Commercial Property insurance policies exclude pollution-related losses unless the loss was caused by a “specified cause of loss,” usually named in the policy...and usually confined to occurring on the insured premises.

Tens of thousands of claims will be filed under the Business Income and Extra Expense sections of commercial insurance policies. Untold number of businesses will be adversely affected by the oil spill, such as resort owners, commercial fishermen and shrimpers, coastal rental property owners, seafood wholesalers, most tourist-related business at the seashore, and charter fishermen.

But once again, BI and EE coverage requires direct physical loss to covered property. So, many businesses will be shocked to discover that even though they have Business Interruption insurance, it does not mean that they have a legitimate BI claim.

Even those policyholders that do have acceptable and covered BI claims may be limited in their monetary recovery by the policy language. The period of restoration usually does not include any increased period of time due to the enforcement of any ordinance or law that may require a policyholder to mitigate the effects of, or clean up the pollutants.

So most policyholders will be out of luck by filing claims with their own insurance companies. More on this later.

This denial of coverage will spell the bankruptcy and end of tens of thousands of coastal businesses. The ripple effect from those businesses to their customers and suppliers, as well as the families employed by all parties, will be catastrophic.

Third-Party Claims

Another huge consideration is the certainty of third-party claims. First-party insurers that pay claims related to the oil spill will subrogate (seek recovery) against those parties responsible and liable for the damages. Then consider all of the business that will file third-party claims directly against the parties responsible and liable for the damages. The list will continue to mount over the coming decade or longer. Timing will be crucial in this matter, since many of the responsible parties may have already exhausted their liability coverage and their corporate assets. Lawyers may find that many responsible parties will close their doors, effectively barring recovery.

Post-Katrina Insurance Industry Reality

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, scores of insurance companies paid claims that they had originally denied. But sympathetic courts ordered them to pay claims that were arguably not covered. The same kinds of pressures will be brought to bear on ALL insurance companies in the aftermath of this oil spill disaster. In these kinds of widespread catastrophes, insurers will be required to pay claims that they may not owe simply because they CAN PAY. That takes some of the political pressure off of states and Washington.

Monstrous insurance loss payments can bankrupt insurance companies. But even worse are these politically-motivated claims for which the insurance company had not collected a premium. Do not be surprised to see many insurance companies fold in the wake of this ecological disaster if they are required to settle claims politically. And all insurance companies are backed up by reinsurance companies. The reinsurers will be hit with losses also, adding more ripples throughout the worldwide economy.

Lawsuits

In war, there is an old saying; “Kill them all...let God sort ‘em out.” That is kind of the philosophy of trial lawyers. In giant commercial enterprises such as BP, there will be dozens of entities that are involved...the parent company, subsidiary

companies, contractors and suppliers. Trial lawyers customarily target the entities with the deepest pockets...plus everyone else. The lawsuits have already begun, and will name every business entity even remotely connected to the operation of the Deepwater Horizon oil platform. Every entity named in the lawsuits will be forced to defend itself.

And here's where it gets even more complicated.

Many contracts between businesses and contractors contain a Hold Harmless clause that forces the contractor or vendor to absolve the business from liability, or at least to provide legal defense for the business. Common sense will tell you that subcontractors or vendors will have lower liability limits than the controlling entity, like BP. So lower liability limits will max out quickly.

The lawsuits will continue to be filed, and it will take years of legal wrangling to begin seeing damage awards meted out by all the various courts that will be involved.

Gigantic lawsuits and gigantic jury awards have the very real possibility of bankrupting the companies responsible for this oil spill.

Political Realities

Your Washington politicians have already passed legislation that protects their oil company buddies while exposing Americans to immense cleanup costs and business losses. A law passed in response to the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska makes BP responsible for cleanup costs. But the law sets a \$75 million limit on other kinds of non-cleanup damages. So, Federal law limits how much BP has to pay for damages such as lost wages and economic suffering in the Gulf Coast oil spill, despite President Barack Obama's assurances that taxpayers will not be on the hook.

But the hue and cry from the Gulf Coast will be so great that Washington will feel entirely compelled to swoop in and start writing checks. The Hurricane Katrina/Rita debacle of 2005 is a scab on Washington's skin that they don't want torn off. And no Congressman is going to take a position against helping the poor Gulf fishermen and the rest of the populace that makes their living from Gulf and gulf-shore businesses. And despite Obama's assurances, there is no way that he would refuse to sign a disaster relief law.

All of that means that the Federal Government will print more paper money and go deeper in debt. But printing paper money will hasten hyperinflation. And in order for Washington to go deeper in debt, foreign nations must buy American debt securities. Eventually, foreign nations will cease cutting their own throats and say no to Washington.

Tens of thousands of Gulf Coast businesses will cease operations in the months to come. Banks that hold loans and mortgages on those businesses...as well as the loans and mortgages of the employees now thrown out of work...will suffer financial losses. Hundreds of thousands of coastal residences will be unemployed. Cars will be repossessed. Home foreclosures will escalate. Credit card companies will hold uncollectible accounts. Even the local Dairy Queen could suffer economic losses when the surrounding coastal community's economy collapses.

And we haven't even left the Gulf of Mexico yet. If the Gulf Stream moves the oil up the Eastern Seaboard, multiply all these predictions by an X factor.

Conclusion

As you see, the economic impact of the oil spill will reach around the world. Companies in the UK will be affected. Likely some insurers at Lloyd's of London are involved. Reinsurance companies will take hits, which might affect companies in Germany, Switzerland, France and Bermuda. Domestic insurers will likely pay claims due to political pressure. Banks will suffer losses. Businesses will close. Unemployment will spike. Most importantly, it will place crushing pressure on Washington to fix the problem with money...and Washington withstands pressure like a Dixie cup under an elephant's foot.

Therefore, I submit to you that the April 20th Gulf of Mexico oil disaster could very likely be the trigger of the collapse of the American economy.

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DumpDC [blog home](#)

Killing Our World

by: William Rivers Pitt [article link](#)

Tuesday 18 May 2010 | t r u t h o u t | Op-Ed

Tar Balls Turn Up in Florida Keys

by: Daniel Chang [article link](#) [article link](#)

Tuesday 18 May 2010 | The Miami Herald | truthout

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Massive underwater oil cloud may destroy life in Gulf of Mexico

The question remains: How much more damage can our planet handle from Man's arrogant pollution? At what point does all the chemical contamination, fertilizer runoff, carbon emissions and runaway oil pollution of the ocean add up to a global extinction event?

by Mike Adams [article link](#)

05.17.10 | The Silver Bear Cafe

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The Relentless Pursuit of Extreme Energy

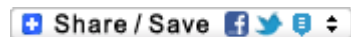
A New Oil Rush Endangers the Gulf of Mexico and the Planet

by Michael T. Klare [article link](#) [article link](#)

Tuesday, May 18, 2010 by | TomDispatch | CommonDreams

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [2:53 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Monday, May 17, 2010

Chris Hedges: BP and the 'Little Eichmanns'

BP and the 'Little Eichmanns'

By Chris Hedges [article link](#)

May 17, 2010 | Truthdig

Cultures that do not recognize that human life and the natural world have a sacred dimension, an intrinsic value beyond monetary value, cannibalize themselves until they die. They ruthlessly exploit the natural world and the members of their society in the name of progress until exhaustion or collapse, blind to the fury of their own self-destruction. The oil pouring into the Gulf of Mexico, estimated to be perhaps as much as 100,000 barrels a day, is part of our foolish death march. It is one more blow delivered by the corporate state, the trade of life for gold. But this time collapse, when it comes, will not be confined to the geography of a decayed civilization. It will be global.

Those who carry out this global genocide—men like BP's Chief Executive Tony Hayward, who assures us that "The Gulf of Mexico is a very big ocean. The amount of oil and dispersant we are putting into it is tiny in relation to the total water

volume”—are, to steal a line from [Ward Churchill](#), “little Eichmanns.” They serve Thanatos, the forces of death, the dark instinct Sigmund Freud identified within human beings that propels us to annihilate all living things, including ourselves. These deformed individuals lack the capacity for empathy. They are at once banal and dangerous. They possess the peculiar ability to organize vast, destructive bureaucracies and yet remain blind to the ramifications. The death they dispense, whether in the pollutants and carcinogens that have made cancer an epidemic, the dead zone rapidly being created in the Gulf of Mexico, the melting polar ice caps or the deaths last year of 45,000 Americans who could not afford proper medical care, is part of the cold and rational exchange of life for money.

The corporations, and those who run them, consume, pollute, oppress and kill. The little Eichmanns who manage them reside in a parallel universe of staggering wealth, luxury and splendid isolation that rivals that of the closed court of Versailles. The elite, sheltered and enriched, continue to prosper even as the rest of us and the natural world start to die. They are numb. They will drain the last drop of profit from us until there is nothing left. And our business schools and elite universities churn out tens of thousands of these deaf, dumb and blind systems managers who are endowed with sophisticated skills of management and the incapacity for common sense, compassion or remorse. These technocrats mistake the art of manipulation with knowledge.

“The longer one listened to him, the more obvious it became that his inability to speak was closely connected with an inability to think, namely, to think from the standpoint of somebody else,” Hannah Arendt wrote of “Eichmann in Jerusalem.” “No communication was possible with him, not because he lied but because he was surrounded by the most reliable of all safeguards against words and the presence of others, and hence against reality as such.”

Our ruling class of technocrats, as [John Ralston Saul](#) points out, is effectively illiterate. “One of the reasons that he is unable to recognize the necessary relationship between power and morality is that moral traditions are the product of civilization and he has little knowledge of his own civilization,” Saul writes of the technocrat. Saul calls these technocrats “hedonists of power,” and warns that their “obsession with structures and their inability or unwillingness to link these to the public good make this power an abstract force—a force that works, more often than not, at cross-purposes to the real needs of a painfully real world.”

BP, which made \$6.1 billion in profits in the first quarter of this year, never obtained permits from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The protection of the ecosystem did not matter. But BP is hardly alone. Drilling with utter disregard to the ecosystem is common practice among oil companies, according to a report in The New York Times. Our corporate state has gutted environmental regulation as tenaciously as it has gutted financial regulation and habeas corpus. Corporations make no distinction between our personal impoverishment and the impoverishment of the ecosystem that sustains the human species. And the abuse, of us and the natural world, is as rampant under Barack Obama as it was under George W. Bush. The branded figure who sits in the White House is a puppet, a face used to mask an insidious system under which we as citizens have been disempowered and under which we become, along with the natural world, collateral damage. As Karl Marx understood, unfettered capitalism is a revolutionary force. And this force is consuming us.

Karl Polanyi in his book “[The Great Transformation](#),” written in 1944, laid out the devastating consequences—the depressions, wars and totalitarianism—that grow out of a so-called self-regulated free market. He grasped that “fascism, like socialism, was rooted in a market society that refused to function.” He warned that a financial system always devolved, without heavy government control, into a Mafia capitalism—and a Mafia political system—which is a good description of our corporate government. Polanyi warned that when nature and human beings are objects whose worth is determined by the market, then human beings and nature are destroyed. Speculative excesses and growing inequality, he wrote, always dynamite the foundation for a continued prosperity and ensure “the demolition of society.”

“In disposing of a man’s labor power the system would, incidentally, dispose of the physical, psychological, and moral entity ‘man’ attached to that tag,” Polanyi wrote. “Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime, and starvation. Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighborhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted, military safety jeopardized, the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed. Finally, the market administration of purchasing power would periodically liquidate business enterprise, for shortages and surfeits of money would prove as disastrous to business as floods and droughts in primitive society. Undoubtedly, labor, land, and money

markets are essential to a market economy. But no society could stand the effects of such a system of crude fictions even for the shortest stretch of time unless its human and natural substance as well as its business organizations was protected against the ravages of this satanic mill.”

The corporate state is a runaway freight train. It shreds the Kyoto Accords in Copenhagen. It plunders the U.S. Treasury so speculators can continue to gamble with billions in taxpayer subsidies in our perverted system of casino capitalism. It disenfranchises our working class, decimates our manufacturing sector and denies us funds to sustain our infrastructure, our public schools and our social services. It poisons the planet. We are losing, every year across the globe, an area of farmland greater than Scotland to erosion and urban sprawl. There are an estimated 25,000 people who die every day somewhere in the world because of contaminated water. And some 20 million children are mentally impaired each year by malnourishment.

America is dying in the manner in which all imperial projects die. Joseph Tainter, in his book “The Collapse of Complex Societies,” argues that the costs of running and defending an empire eventually become so burdensome, and the elite becomes so calcified, that it becomes more efficient to dismantle the imperial superstructures and return to local forms of organization. At that point the great monuments to empire, from the [Sumer](#) and Mayan temples to the Roman bath complexes, are abandoned, fall into disuse and are overgrown. But this time around, Tainter warns, because we have nowhere left to migrate and expand, “world civilization will disintegrate as a whole.” This time around we will take the planet down with us.

“We in the lucky countries of the West now regard our two-century bubble of freedom and affluence as normal and inevitable; it has even been called the ‘end’ of history, in both a temporal and teleological sense,” writes Ronald Wright in “[A Short History of Progress](#).” “Yet this new order is an anomaly: the opposite of what usually happens as civilizations grow. Our age was bankrolled by the seizing of half the planet, extended by taking over most of the remaining half, and has been sustained by spending down new forms of natural capital, especially fossil fuels. In the New World, the West hit the biggest bonanza of all time. And there won’t be another like it—not unless we find the civilized Martians of H.G. Wells, complete with the vulnerability to our germs that undid them in his War of the Worlds.”

The moral and physical contamination is matched by a cultural contamination. Our political and civil discourse has become gibberish. It is dominated by elaborate spectacles, celebrity gossip, the lies of advertising and scandal. The tawdry and the salacious occupy our time and energy. We do not see the walls falling around us. We invest our intellectual and emotional energy in the inane and the absurd, the empty amusements that preoccupy a degenerate culture, so that when the final collapse arrives we can be herded, uncomprehending and fearful, into the inferno.

Truthdig [Chris Hedges' Columns](#)
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Obama's Gulf Eco-Catastrophe, Far Worse than Katrina, More Like a Hiroshima; Emergency Legislation Needed

By Rob Kall [article link](#)

May 16, 2010 | OpEdNews

Too Big to Exist - Big Oil

By Michael Collins [article link](#)

May 16, 2010 | OpEdNews

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BP's Oil Spill is Latest Crime in a History of Plunder

Oil giant reaps huge profits from its global plunder

by Mazda Majidi [article link](#)

May 16, 2010 | Global Research

Global Research [home page](#)

Brace Yourself: This Is the Tip of the Iceberg for Oil-Induced Enviro Catastrophes

The blame-game theory is still a red herring distracting us from the environmental disaster's prime suspect: All of us.

By Scott Thill [article link](#)

May 17, 2010 | AlterNet

10 Reasons to Be Alarmed About Our Catastrophic Oil Addiction

War, terrorism, economic instability -- these are just a few of the reasons to be concerned about our addiction to oil.

By Luke Combellick [article link](#)

May 15, 2010 | AlterNet

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:15 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Sunday, May 16, 2010

[We Worship God By Loving Our Fellow Man](#)

MM Book 1 Chapter 3-14

For many, excess is never enough — we are responsible for “our” national crimes, done in “our” name(s), the nation’s business, its evil, its demands: a re-evaluation is needed !! – the Gospel is DISCLOSURE, systemic disclosure: **GOD IS A WAY OF LIFE, GOD *IS* LIFE [THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS (WAYS OF LIFE) BEFORE ME], LOVE, not systemic lust, claim** – money is not the cure, it is the disease — the current of time/event flow, the situational systemic current, the raging waves [foaming shame], the undertow, must be fought against, calm water must be reached for extrication/ withdrawal – **our systemic definition must be of God not the devil !!** – WE ARE THE GOD-AGENCY IN THIS KOSMOS, THIS PHYSICAL WORLD, WE ARE THE ** HOUSE OF PRAYER ** [awareness and supplication], THE SPIRITUAL INJECTION [application], THE VERY ** ARM OF THE LORD ** DIRECTING THE HAND OF GOD (God’s Spirit) !! – God’s presence provides the healing – humility is accepting God’s “gifts” as gifts to be gifted, not taken and claimed – **LIFE IS GIFTING, DEATH IS TAKING !!** – the erosion of God by the constant barrage [the sea], the waves, the storms, the seeming splendor of evil, the pull [lack of awareness; misuse] of lust ... the immersion, the drowning — the “proof” of Christ is in each of us, look there ... – intrusive, psychological fracturing, the disposal, the demise of our common human-ity !! – MOST OF US ARE TOO EMPTY TO GIVE !! – OUR EMPTINESS IMPELS US TO TAKE !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 3-15

What we *do* unto “our fellow-man” we *do* unto God [our being and doing], and what we do unto ourselves we do unto God also: selfishness is an evil that must be overcome, our self-prejudice, individually and group !! – family, marriage and parenthood are a sacrifice of self (and by thus, we understand God): God sacrificed for us, and we must do the same: we are all one human family, soon to be God-family !! — social support, affiliative behaviour begins with family and friends – we must be more befriending, more Christ-like; who we are is indicated by the quality of our friends and friendships – we must be an unselfish gift, freely giving at all times: support/edification – what you are, I AM, what I AM, you shall be [Isa 45:7 "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD (JEHOVAH, "the *existing* One") do all these things"] – ** **WE WORSHIP GOD BY LOVING OUR FELLOW MAN** ** – our future is not in our selfish groupings, it is *in* God, “being” within HIS *EXISTING* ONE FAMILY !! – our “being and doing” must be *as* God, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION, OF OUR HEALING !! – GOD WILL HEAL OUR SPIRITUAL ILLNESS AND THE SPIRITUAL DAMAGE WE HAVE INFLICTED !!

MM Book 1 Chapter 3-16

Genocide: a problem from hell, a creation of it [the eradication of the other, an absolute negation] – “genocide” word origin 1944, in answer to Churchill’s “we are in the presence of a crime without a name” – the penalty, cost for “bystanding” must be increased: we have a moral obligation to stop genocide, to intervene even in the face of adversity – our selfish interests should not come into consideration, our “national and self-prejudices” must be overcome [the slow death of non-systemic, expendable humanity, and of our humanity defines "genocide" also (**between 30-50 million needless deaths per year worldwide: deaths of poverty, preventable disease, pollution, conflict, etc., 20,000 die of chronic malnutrition alone, each-and-every day, that's over seven million deaths every year**)]; the genocidal politico-business systemic that enables our selfishness, that enforces and excuses it, even expects and demands it !! – **this world must be stopped**; war is murder, you cannot legalize it, war is criminal, especially war as excuse; WE HAVE NO RIGHT !! – we are a war society, our whole systemic-being is adversarial, every aspect of “our”-selves !! – MONEY IS THE DEVIL’S WEAPON, OUR FALSE GOD, and we bow down to it every moment of our lives; it is our excuse, selfishness manifested; we are immersed in the evil, we wallow in the filth; we don’t grasp it, it grasps us, holds us; the store is open 24/7 and we are satiated !! — this is all we know, we need a new teacher [Christ]; words of blood and thunder or the Word of God, a still, small voice – our lives are in each other, we **are** each other; WE DO NOT EXIST ALONE !! – WE MUST OVERCOME; IT IS NOT A MATTER OF BRAVERY, WE HAVE NO CHOICE – WE WILL CEASE TO EXIST OTHERWISE !!

Mammon or Messiah Book 1 Chapter 3 [web page](#)

Mammon or Messiah Book 1 [blog home](#)



Posted by mammonmessiah at [12:18 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Mickey Z: There's No Time Like Now to Be an Activist

There's No Time Like Now to Be an Activist

by: Mickey Z. [article link](#)

15 May 2010 | t r u t h o u t | Op-Ed

Eighty-one tons of mercury is emitted into the atmosphere each year as a result of electric power generation. Every square mile of ocean hosts 46,000 pieces of floating plastic.

Here it comes ...

Every second, 10,000 gallons of gasoline are burned in the US. Each year, Americans use 2.2 billion pounds of pesticides.

Wait for it ...

Every two seconds, a human being starves to death. Every 46 seconds, a woman is raped in America. Every day, 29,158 children under the age of five die from preventable causes - every single day.

We're almost there ...

Ninety percent of the large fish in the ocean and 80 percent of the world's forests are gone. Each day, 200,000 acres of rainforest are destroyed, over 100 plant and animal species go extinct, and 13 million tons of toxic chemicals released across the globe.

What an amazing time to be an activist ...

No, I'm not being cynical. I'm simply listening to the sound of opportunity knocking ... kicking down the damn door, you might say.

When else in all of human history has there been a time when we were in better position to shape the future? Ecosystems are screaming for mercy and our land base is practically an endangered species. What we do (or don't do) in the next few years could quite possibly tilt us all toward either the point of no return or a far more sane form of society. In other words, each and every one of us can take part - right now - in creating the most important social changes ever imagined. Here's how:

1. How to Be a Good Organizer

- a) Spend some time thinking about trees.
- b) Imagine what clear cutting looks like, sounds like and feels like.
- c) Remind yourself that 80 percent of the world's forests are gone.
- d) Be a good organizer.

2. How to Find Like-Minded Comrades Ready to Start Right Now

- a) Go to the beach.
- b) Smell the salty air and listen to the waves.
- c) Remind yourself that 90 percent of the large fish in the ocean are gone.
- d) Find like-minded comrades ready to start right now.

3. How to Plan a Protest That Does More Than March

- a) Remind yourself that 200,000 acres of rainforest are destroyed each day. Picture a planet devoid of rainforests. Picture a human body without lungs.
- b) Remind yourself that a woman is raped every 46 seconds in America. Visualize the terror and trauma of these experiences.
- c) Remind yourself that 29,158 children under the age of five die from preventable causes each day. Imagine the feelings of grief, sorrow and loss.
- d) Plan a protest that does more than march.

4. How to Give a Rousing Speech That Results in Immediate Direct Action

- a) Find a quiet place.
- b) Close your eyes and breathe deeply.
- c) Think about animals in slaughterhouses and laboratories. Think about humans in prisons. Think about civilians in a war zone. Think about someone you love dying of cancer caused by corporate-created toxins.
- d) Give a rousing speech that results in immediate direct action.

5. How to Bring Down the Dominant Culture

- a) Ask yourself if you're content with your relatively high quality of life being possible thanks to the poor quality of life of so many others elsewhere.
- b) Ask yourself if you're content with your relative freedom being possible thanks to the oppression of so many others elsewhere.
- c) Accept that we are all accomplices to the perpetual global crime called "civilization."
- d) Bring down the dominant culture.

This isn't about skin color, gender, or what parcel of geography you happen to have been born on. I'm not talking about party affiliations, incremental reform or what sky god you've chosen to worship. It's all about recognizing a crisis and taking the appropriate measures.

We're on the brink of economic, social and environmental collapse. What an extraordinary time to be alive. How lucky are we? We've been trusted with the most vital mission of all time: *survival*.

Mickey Z. is probably the only person on the planet to have appeared in both a karate flick with Billy "Tae Bo" Blanks and a political book with Howard Zinn. He is the author of 9 books - most recently "Self Defense for Radicals" and his second novel, "Dear Vito." He is a regular writer for Planet Green and can be found on the web at www.mickeyz.net.

truthout [Articles](#) by Mickey Z.
truthout [home page](#)

Survival Podcast

[Episode-435](#) - The Revolution is You

May 14th, 2010

Episode-435 - The Revolution is You [54:15m][mp3]:

We only occasionally dip into politics around here, time to time we focus on economics and that always by the very nature of our current state must include some political components as well. Some members of the audience want more and some want less and wish we would stick 100% to practical pepping action.

The reality is the two are one in the same! Make no mistake about it this is a revolution you and I are conducting together. Today we discuss the multi-planked revolution where "taking this country back" isn't just about the next election or political topic "du jour". No this revolution is about how we live, how we prepare, how we self educate and above all how we impact those around us simply by living as who and what we are, human with sovereign rights bestowed upon us by our creator.

Survival Podcast [home page](#)

Today's Survival Show

[Episode 88](#) – Learning to live without and to be content

May 7th, 2010

Learning to live without and be content [35:04m][mp3]:

Learning to live without and become somewhat of a minimalist seems to be catching on, but not quite enough. In this show, I discuss the sacrifices many people all over the world make each day in order to survive. This show is not meant to tell you what to do or give a lecture, but rather...some helpful suggestions to improve your standard of living.

Highlights:

What do you really need?

Simplification often means relief.

Examples of cutting back that don't impact your life much at all.

The sad but true stories of how people sacrifice.

The positive benefits of "trimming the fat."

Redefining Success.

Today's Survival Show [home page](#)

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Siv O'Neill: The Different Face of the Third World War

The Different Face of the Third World War

By Siv O'Neill [article link](#)

May 13, 2010 | Axis of Logic

Make no mistake. The third World War is right here. Now. It has been here for longer than you would believe.

The world is at war. Unrelenting, genocidal war. Another war that is a racket, but with a different face and a different racket. A war that kills millions, as is usually the case. There are two sides to this war, but it is not the East against the West. It's not even the South against the North. It is not a geographical war. It's a class war. It is the Poor against the Rich on all five continents. And right now the Rich are winning.

A brief look back

The much touted Founding Fathers wanted nothing more praiseworthy than an oligarchy, a country ruled by an elite where Blacks and women were not citizens with equal rights, not even the right to vote. Women only gained the right to vote through the passage of the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution in 1920.

In spite of the half-heartedness and hesitations by President Roosevelt and some egregious mistakes that had serious consequences, the end of this era still came out as far more people-friendly than anything the country had seen before. Labor unions experienced tremendous gains during the thirties and Social Security was created in 1935.

Fast forward to Lyndon B. Johnson and his signing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, obviously a big step in the direction of democracy. U.S. citizens were now convinced that their country was not just the most prosperous in the world, but also the most moral, the most free and the most civilized. And the most powerful.

The social contract that stemmed from the last Great Depression has been torn apart bit by bit in the decades that followed. The second-rate movie actor Ronald Reagan took the first big steps towards corporatism, intrinsically accompanied by total contempt for the people. This glamorous president who was playing Hollywood with the country seriously set about undermining the social safety net, a gradual thawing of programs focused on the welfare of the citizens.

The war has become globalized

Things are changing however. The sudden collapse of the Twin Towers and the screams of dying people made it possible. Civil rights have been dramatically stifled through the Patriot Act, furtively steered through a Congress in shock and almost total ignorance in October of 2001. The country has since then been in a state of permanent war.

We are living the war. It just has a different face. I am not talking about Iraq or Afghanistan or Pakistan. I am not talking about the renewal of the Cold War, as the U.S. Empire is staking its last pennies on establishing influence in republics of the former Soviet Union, desperately trying to outdo Russia in countries where the main or the second language is Russian. In these countries dependence on Russian oil and gas is of such primary importance that even Ukraine has had to listen to the loud voices of the people and move over to the Russian sphere, for economic and certainly also for cultural reasons. The U.S.-supported orange revolution is over. Viktor Andriyovych Yushchenko is history.

This current war has no borders. War is globalized, like everything else steered by the obscene organization that rules the world of today. The hugely powerful multinationals in collusion with the governing bodies of the world have orchestrated a way of running the world which seems to them to be a given winner. It is not even Whites against the brown peoples who by far dominate the world population. The White upper-class people are of course scared out of their wits knowing well that one day soon they will be outnumbered even in their own home countries, which is most of the West. Racism, in each individual country and globally, is very clearly part of this ugly war.

However, globalization is the ruling principle of today's war. If the Chinese want to take a part in this upper class war on the poor, they are welcome to the country club. If the Indian political leaders are willing to make a deal with the multinationals, they are also taken into the club as full members. But at the origin of the scheming by the Neocon cavemen, the Multinational Money Men alone are the Übermenschen; the secondary collaborators get a fair share only because, for financial reasons, their weight is impossible to ignore.

The U.S. leaders may finally have realized that there is no way they can win a geographical war in the Middle East, in Central Asia, in Africa or anywhere else. They are now having a hard time extracting themselves from the senseless wars that are going on full speed in Afghanistan and now also Pakistan, turning both these countries into a maelstrom of ubiquitous local wars. Iraq is a ruined country but the U.S. will probably manage one day fairly soon to withdraw most of its military, declaring victory.

The reasons for this unending war (and possibly the solution to it) is the major equation we have to solve in order to understand the world we live in. It is not the United States alone that is in this war. It is not a war of one country against another country. It is the multinational corporations that are sucking up the entire wealth of the world, leaving the crumbs to the people so that they can survive as the slaves of the powerful leaders.

The center of gravity has changed in this new world of robots and money makers. Washington is no more the unilateral leader. The U.S. government has turned into a group of yes-sayers to the Big Corporations that are spread all over the planet. The world economy is in free fall, but you are soon about to see the top Money Men come out of the squeeze with all their billions intact, if not multiplied.

Poverty kills

The poor are being squeezed almost out of their existence and the educated and formerly prosperous middle classes are disappearing from the rosters of the comfortable class that included, for instance, middle-range businessmen, managers and intellectuals. Medium-sized businesses are being squeezed to death and the educated middle classes are seen as less and less essential in a world where money alone rules. Education and the arts are dying a slow death, not being considered as necessary, in fact seen rather as a menace to the new world order where dumbed down and docile slaves are the kind of pliable citizens the power people thrive on.

Small retail businesses are being squeezed out of existence by the Walmarts and the Carrefours all over the world. Subsistence farmers are being bankrupted by huge industrial farms every day. In Africa, the family farms that provided for the basic needs of the family and possibly left some produce over to sell at the local market are being killed by the requirements by IMF and the World Bank, the two major contributors to worldwide poverty.

The big money lenders demand, as a requirement for a loan, that the poor farmers produce flowers and fruit for export to the rich West and are thus forced to buy food products imported from the West, in particular from the U.S. They can't afford buying all the products they need for a decent livelihood. They go bankrupt and they move to the enormously overpopulated shantytowns around the megacities of the world, Lagos, Cape Town, Mumbai, Delhi, Bangkok, Mexico City, São Paulo, Shanghai, etc., and even the outrageous slums in the richest country in the world are fighting against obscene poverty, hunger and malnutrition¹. One billion people, almost one tenth of the population of the world now live in shantytowns all over the world.

The war on the poor people across the world

The war on poverty has taken on a new meaning. It is a war on the poor. The poor are the major victims of the Third World War. AIDS and other diseases, violent droughts, inundations and natural catastrophes are used to eradicate the billions of poor people who are seen as dead ballast that is making the steering of the ship difficult to handle. Dead mass that is better gotten rid of - by any means available.

If nature comes to their help, so much the better. Let the victims of hurricane Katrina keep getting swallowed up by poverty and early death. Let Haiti disappear as an island for poor people where those victims of hundreds of years of cruel

colonialism were managing to squeeze out a living only by sheer willpower, in spite of the ruining of their environment by these colonial powers. New Orleans and Haiti will now be made into luxury tourist sites for the wealthy who don't know what to do with their money.

Let the poor victims of the scandalous gigantic BP oil leak in the Gulf die a slow death, deprived of their livelihood as hard-working fishermen or the owners of small businesses by the shoreline. The entire area is now polluted beyond repair or at least suffering the devastating impact of the disaster through the destruction of the offshore, shoreline and significant tidal wetland ecosystems, due to criminal neglect by the oil company and by the government². It is the little people who will be suffering from this devastation for years to come. The big companies always keep their profits intact.

The progress towards civil rights and a government for the people has been in steady decline ever since the big steps forward that were made by FDR and LBJ. In fact, the U.S. leadership, in tight partnership with the Big Corporations, has taken increasingly big steps towards stifling every effort in favor of people's rights or easing the plight of the poor that might have appeared (and been ignored) on the Washington radar, emanating from people-friendly organizations. The Supreme Court which is supposed to rein in the other two branches of the Government, has been stacked with regressive judges and even the last vestiges of democratic rights are in danger of being overruled by that Court.

The 'War on Terror' serves the purpose of idealizing the West and demonizing the Arab world, the Islam religion and all people of darker skin color. The war was not born out of 9/11. The 'War on Terror' had been invented well before that shocking event. Defeating the Taliban, taking over Iraq and the Middle East had been in the eye of the Washington telescope for a long time.

But the attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, whoever was the real agent behind the deed, served to reinforce the making of the U.S. citizens into docile lemmings, flag waving non-thinking 'patriots', blind to the killing of their civil rights and the making of the Constitution into a quaint document.

The base of Neoconservative ideology

Globalization enters the stage. It too has been a long time coming. Washington is now going to wage a war without borders, a war of economic conquest that will make Washington into the capital of the Planet. They are probably capable of seeing that a unilateral world is no more realistic, but the U.S. power people are certainly counting on Washington carrying the heaviest stick in the fashioning of the world into a money making machine. Multi-nationalism will have to be accepted. U.S. leaders don't even need to steep the world in 'Americanism' by spreading their gospel of consumerism and ignorant worship of 'the only free and civilized country in the world'. The corporations are doing the work for them. Buying is the only remaining virtue.

Thinking and straight vision are doomed, killed in the cradle. History is taught the way it suits the U.S. leadership and the apathy of ignorance is taking over the populace. News is skewed to fit the powers that be. The media has been bought up by Big Money and has become infotainment, the opium of the people. Hand in hand with religion of course. Patriotism and fundamentalist religion become the ersatz for critical thinking. Only the sheep and lemmings are encouraged. People who don't toe the line are tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail.

This is the New World Order. The Neocons are sitting on the throne. Democracy is gone. Corporatism alone rules the world. Countries all over the planet are turning into police states where people are not expected to have any constitutional rights.

So what is the center-piece of this new war? It is getting rid of the poor to make room for the super rich. Reducing the world population by all possible means. By starving the masses, by spreading diseases, by killing and rendering homeless millions of innocent civilians. Sure, drones and missiles still have an important function to fill. Only the rich so-called elite is going to have any say at all in this paradise for the leaders of the world. The question they don't seem to pose is: Who is going to buy the products and who is going to make them, other than the Chinese and people in sweatshops in the third world?

Recolonizing Africa still looks like a possibility for Washington, even though they are in for a hard fight with China on that continent. Ruling over the oil rich Middle East and Central Asia still seems like a half-won goal for the U.S generals and politicians. Globalization is going to serve as a magic wand for Washington to extend its rule to countries via the multinational corporations. They can not possibly invade China, nor India, nor Russia, nor Brazil. But they plan on being the bosses in the running of the world corporations and that way they will still come out as the winners. The stealing of the national resources of countries all over the world will be reinforced and turned into the hands of the corporations. But the signature on the document will be Washington's. They make trade deals with the countries they can't conquer and the future is theirs.

The Colossus is bleeding

However, what is the real future going to be like? What the present rulers don't take into account is people's never-ending fight for their own freedom. For self-rule. For their dignity.

People are rising up all over the world. They don't want to be globalized, to become numbers in a world of increasing profit for the wealthy only. They don't like to lose their savings because of the zero-producing speculation of a tiny clique of callous gamblers. They don't like for the government to use their tax money to bail out banks who go bankrupt when their CEOs still get billions of \$ in bonuses.

They don't like money for education and social budgets to be cut short and their children to be faced with up to \$100,000 in loans for their college education to pay off after graduation - even though they can't get decent jobs. They don't like jobs to be outsourced to low-paying countries and business plants to be closed down in their home town, leaving them jobless. They don't like to have to pay higher taxes because the rich hide their profits in tax havens, such as Bermuda and the Cayman Islands and hundreds of other nations.

One day they are bound to see that Europe, which they call socialist – the horror! – can afford free university education, good health care and decent social services, partly because European countries spend a fraction of the outrageous amounts of the people's money the U.S. spends on its military budgets.

Major Southeast Asian countries have formed their own free trade zone, AFTA – 'ASEAN Free Trade Area'. They simply don't need the West. And China alone is now the world's second largest economy, having passed by Japan in 2009. Several Latin American countries are equally leading a life increasingly independent of the U.S. Empire, forming their own free trade zone, MERCOSUR, passing on the profits from their national resources to their own people³.

Is it finally becoming obvious that globalization the way Milton Friedman and the Chicago School boys saw it – shock and awe, conquer and buy – is just not going to work?⁴ The world economy is in a meltdown and the dominoes are falling in Europe after the upcoming bailout of Greece. The effects are spreading to the far corners of the world. More and more countries were already turning their backs on the U.S. - Turkey, Russia, China, Iran, Syria, Lebanon and others have no use for the former Empire any more. And the Middle East is burning.

Was it maybe an illusion that the planet could be made into one huge corporation with the U.S. as its CEO?

Are the people in all parts of the world going to follow the example of the Greeks and put all business to a standstill unless they are given their rights? Is a people's revolution finally about to take the stage away from the usurpers?

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3. For more information on NAFTA and MERCOSUR - see Siv O'Neill: ' [Capitalism Is Dying a Natural Death](#) '

4. 'Blurred Clarity: [Milton Friedman and the Chicago School of Economic Have Much to Answer For.](#)'

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Saturday, May 15, 2010

[Les Leopold: Help! What's the Cure for Financial Insanity?](#)

Help! What's the Cure for Financial Insanity?

by Les Leopold [article link](#)

May 14, 2010 | The Huffington Post

Now that the bank lobbyists are nearly finished neutering the financial reform bill, it's time to face reality: our financial world will continue to be run by the very financiers who crashed the system two years ago. The bankers' arguments ricocheting through the halls of Congress make it seem as if our financial system is basically rational and sound -- that only a few flaws need fixing. That's lunacy. Our bright bankers may be rational as individuals, but collectively they perpetuate a fractured system gone utterly mad... and getting madder every day.

So the financial insanity will continue, with such psychotic outcomes as these:

1. Our pensions and 401ks will continue on their roller coaster ride, driven by market chaos and high-speed computer cacophony. Last week, the automatic trading programs our financial geniuses invented sent the Dow into a one-hour, 1,000-point freefall. Thank goodness it was only one hour. Two would have set off a global panic. No one is sure what happened or why. But don't worry, we're told. The glitches will be fixed and all will be well. (Just as a little technological tinkering is sure to prevent another offshore oil disaster too--not a problem!) In a saner world we would be asking the obvious: Does that high-speed trading serve the needs of our people, or is it just another high-risk strategy to enrich the largest and most connected investors?

2. Big financial institutions, now fully assured that they are indeed too big to fail, will continue to dominate both finance and politics. Anyone in their right mind knows that allowing five or six banks to control our entire financial system is a recipe for disaster and a major threat to democracy. What's the excuse for this form of madness? Well, we're told, during the Great Depression 4,000 banks failed (including lots of little ones), which proves that size doesn't matter. Please help me with this logic: Many banks failed and caused the Great Depression. A few big banks failed and caused our recent Great Recession...Therefore big banks are better? (Somebody flunked their Logic 101 class.) Here's what our experience tells us. Banks, both big and small, when left to play out in the street unsupervised, often end up at the casino tables-- gambling with our money. Big banks are an even bigger risk, because they have the power to gamble with our democracy as well.

3. We'll continue to pay top hedge fund managers 26,000 times more than we pay teachers. This goes back to a question I asked in an earlier post: [Are 25 hedge fund managers worth 658,000 teachers?](#) Apparently they are, since that's what they netted in 2009 during which they enjoyed the benefits of our \$8 trillion (not billion) bailout. We rescued every hedge fund and bank, but left more than 30 million Americans scrambling for full-time work. This soaring unemployment caused tax revenues to tank, touching off fiscal crises in nearly every state. So governments dramatically cut spending and

axed tens of thousands of teachers. The ultimate losers? Public school kids all over the country who were hoping for a good education. The winners? The bankers who caused the crisis. Even during the worst year since the Great Depression--the sun was still shining on Wall Street, with a \$150 billion bonus pool and a billion dollars each for the top 25 hedge fund managers. We put no windfall profits taxes on those billions, even though the money came directly from the U.S. treasury in the form of bailouts. We even allowed that income to be taxed at lower capital gains rates. That's rational?

4. Little countries that falter, like Greece, will continue to put the whole global economy at risk. We're told that the Greeks have only themselves to blame: They retire too early, drink too much retsina and often break into dance without warning....all on borrowed money. Yes, they broke the EU's debt limit rules. But they had a bit of help from Goldman Sachs, which made hundreds of millions of dollars in fees for creating complex derivatives to "help" the Greek government hide their debt. And yet Congress still refuses to regulate these scary financial items because they are "customized." Of course it was the global crash begun by our big banks that sparked the Greek fiscal crisis in the first place. In a sane world, the largest banks and the wealthiest investors in Greek debt (who caused the crash in the first place) would be forced to make reparations for the damage they caused. Instead, we have to make the Greeks stop dancing? Sicko.

5. The deficit hysteria drumbeat will build to a deafening crescendo. Forget about taxing the super-rich--we've got to cut benefits for working people instead. Respected journalists like New York Times columnist [David Leonhardt](#) warn us that we're all living beyond our means. It's time to tighten our belts or we'll end up like Greece. No more tax breaks for health and housing. We've got to retire later, with less money, and cut our medical expenses. And our wages have to become more "competitive." But who is "we"? Where are all these high-living people? The average non-supervisory production worker in America (about 75 percent of the workforce) has already seen an 18 percent drop in real wages since the mid 1970s. Meanwhile productivity increased by more than 90 percent. Yet now we've got to tighten our belts? Where did all that money from the higher productivity go, if not to us? No surprise here: into the hands of the few.

It all goes back to that most glaring symptom and cause of our psychosis: our insane maldistribution of income, which gets worse and worse every year. The richest 1 percent of Americans now earn more than the bottom 50 percent. Back in 1973, the richest 1 percent of earners collected 8 percent of the national income. By 2006, the top 1 percent got nearly 23 percent of the national income -- the highest proportion since 1929. Or look at the pay gap on the job: In 1970, the top 100 CEOs earned 45 times more than their workers, on average. In 2009 the ratio was 1,071 to 1.

Here's an example of what this maldistribution is costing us: The top 400 richest Americans have a combined wealth of more than \$1.3 trillion. And that's enough money to endow every public college and university in the country so that students could attend tuition-free in perpetuity. (Hopefully some would decide to graduate before then.)

We need to return to Eisenhower era tax rates: 91 percent on those earning over \$3 million in today's dollars. The money would roll in, and the deficit hawks would sound like parakeets.

The ultimate insanity of our current moment is that the richest investors and the largest bankers in the world just crashed our system, got bailed out by taxpayers, grew even larger, and now are back to earning record profits and bonuses. They caused the biggest jobs crisis since the Great Depression and drove the entire global economy into a ditch--and they could do it again any minute. And now they're telling us to tighten our belts and act more responsibly?

Here's the good news. The American people sense something is really wrong. They're angry at Wall Street and anyone in its pocket. It's taken a while, but the truth is seeping in. The angry public forced Congress to bring those squirming bankers into their hearing rooms. Unfortunately, Congress caved when it came to actually passing a strong reform bill that would bust up the biggest banks, end windfall profits and curb the gambling. Too bad the average citizen has no way to register his or her anger except to vote the "ins" out. Since both parties are largely in the pocket of the financial industry (and other industries), it's hard, if not impossible, to be optimistic about the new "ins."

Imagine if we could vote for something like a jobs and environment party, free from Wall Street's money, that was dedicated to putting ALL of our people to work building a truly sustainable economy? Now that would be really insane.

[Les Leopold](#) is the author of [The Looting of America: How Wall Street's Game of Fantasy Finance destroyed our Jobs, Pensions and Prosperity, and What We Can Do About It](#) Chelsea Green Publishing, June 2009.

The Huffington Post [home page](#)

Why the 'Experts' Failed to See How Financial Fraud Collapsed the Economy

by James K. Galbraith [article link](#)

Galbraith to senators: "I write to you from a disgraced profession. Economic theory ... failed miserably to understand the forces behind the financial crisis."

May 15, 2010 | Alternet

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Finance 202: How We Became Debt Slaves (And Learned to Love It)

By Gordon Arnaut [article link](#)

May 14, 2010 | Information Clearing House

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After Money

by John Michael Greer [article link](#) [article link](#)

05.13.10 | The Archdruid Report

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Forget the politicians...

by George Carlin

The politicians are put there to give you the idea that you have freedom of choice ... you don't. You have no choice. You have owners. They own you. They own everything. They own all the important land. They own, and control the corporations. They've long since bought, and paid for the Senate, the Congress, the state houses, the city halls, they got the judges in their back pockets and they own all the big media companies, so they control just about all of the news and information you get to hear. They got you by the balls. They spend billions of dollars every year lobbying ... lobbying, to get what they want ... Well, we know what they want. They want more for themselves and less for everybody else, but I'll tell you what they don't want ... they don't want a population of citizens capable of critical thinking. They don't want well informed, well educated people capable of critical thinking. They're not interested in that ... that doesn't help them. That's against their interests. That's right. They don't want people who are smart enough to sit around a kitchen table and think about how badly they're getting fucked by a system that threw them overboard 30 fuckin' years ago. They don't want that. You know what they want? They want obedient workers ... Obedient workers, people who are just smart enough to run the machines and do the paperwork. And just dumb enough to passively accept all these increasingly shittier jobs with the lower pay, the longer hours, the reduced benefits, the end of overtime and vanishing pension that disappears the minute you go to collect it, and now they're coming for your Social Security money. They want your fuckin' retirement money. They want it back so they can give it to their criminal friends on Wall Street, and you know something? They'll get it ... they'll get it all from you sooner or later cause they own this fuckin' place. It's a big club and you ain't in it. You and I are not in The big club. By the way, it's the same big club they use to beat you over the head with all day long when they tell you what to believe. All day long beating you over the head with their media telling you what to believe, what to think and what to buy. The table has tilted folks. The game is rigged and nobody seems to notice. Nobody seems to care. Good honest hard-working people ... white collar, blue collar it doesn't matter what color shirt you have on. Good honest hard-working people continue, these are people of modest means ... continue to elect these rich cocksuckers who don't give a fuck about you. They don't give a fuck about you ... they don't give a fuck about you. They don't care about you at all ... at all ... at all, and nobody seems to notice. Nobody seems to care. That's what the owners count on. The fact that Americans will probably remain willfully ignorant of the big red, white and blue dick that's being jammed up their assholes everyday, because the owners of this country know the truth. It's called the American Dream cause you have to be asleep to believe it ...

The Silver Bear Cafe [quote link](#)

Posted by mammonmessiah at [11:04 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Bruce Dixon: What If BP Were A Human Being?

What If BP Were A Human Being?

By Bruce Dixon [article link](#) [article link](#)

May 12, 2010 | Black Agenda Report | AlterNet

The third largest oil company in the world, BP was born in 1909 as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, and was partly owned by the British government. Its headquarters offices are in the UK.. So if it were a flesh and blood person, far and away the wealthiest person on earth, and a British subject. Assuming that our imaginary human BP got into the oil business at the youthful age of say, 20, and stayed at it for just over a century, BP the human being would be closing in on his 121st birthday. Damned few of us will see triple digits, and none of us that reach even our 60s and 70s retain the level of energy, or often of interest that we possessed only a couple decades before. A normal 120 year old human will have more than a few ailments and bodily systems on the brink of failure. But not our human BP. If BP were a person, it would be immensely, almost inconceivably wealthy AND perhaps immortal.

In the 1930s, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company became the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. In the 1970s it swallowed Standard Oil of Ohio, in the 1980s it merged with Amoco, formerly Standard Oil of Indiana, and in the 21st century it bought Arco and other oil companies. Along the way, BP has utilized all these and other brands, like Conoco, at its convenience. Most recently, BO the corporation has rebranded itself, declaing that BP now stood for "Beyond Petroleum."

Among flesh and blood humans, there are no precise analogs to what corporations do when they buy and sell each other. The acts of matrimony and cannibalism perhaps comes closest, with consenting or non-consenting spouses and/or victims, along with assumption of the spouse and/or victim's assets. Among humans, marriage is a reason to change one's name too. Another reason to change one's name is simply to escape one's old record and reputation. Among humans, that's called assuming an alias. So our immortal, immensely wealthy human BP may have been married several times, perhaps several times at once, could be a cannibal, albeit with sometimes willing victims, and operates under several aliases.

You don't have to look too long and hard to understand why a flesh and blood BP would need aliases. The objective of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was to monopolize the rich oil resources of what is now Iran. Among the many illegal acts it committed toward that end was a £5,000 bribe to future British PM Winston Churchill back in 1923 to lobby for its interests. A secular nationalist and democratically elected Iranian government kicked BP out in the early 1950s. BP turned its lobbying to Washington DC, and in 1953, helped persuade the U.S. to overthrow the Democratic Iranian government and installed its puppet, the Shah, popularly known as the Crowned Cannibal. The Shah, in the course of killing millions and stealing billions, invited BP back, and it stayed until 1979, when the Shah was overthrown.

In a century of doing business, BP has been implicated in bribery of public officials, grand theft, fomenting unjust wars, of murder, torture, plunder, environmental destruction, and money laundering in and between scores of countries on every continent except Antarctica. If BP were a person it would be a career criminal, a pathological liar and an international serial killer with a rap sheet several times the size of the Chicago Yellow Pages.

Given his (we're reasonably sure a human BP would not be a woman) global reach and proclivity to corrupt public officials around the world, and past record, BP the human being would be a flight risk. It would be indicted for murder, or at least negligent homicide in the deaths of the last eleven oil workers to die when its rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico. U.S. law doesn't have death penalties for corporations, but the federal government, and most or all of the first wave of Gulf Coast states where the oil slick wil wash up do. We're talking Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas.

The assets of corporations are protected against lawsuits of all kinds. BP and other oil industry giants long ago paid for the insertion of provisions into the U.S. federal code that limit their liability in the case of oil spills to a mere \$75 million dollars. But there are no limits on the liability that individually held wealth can occur. A human BP, even though 120 years

old and immensely wealthy, could see all his assets around the world frozen, would be imprisoned without bail, and might be on trial for his life.

But of course the real BP is a corporation, and death penalties, like laws in general are for humans, not corporations.

In the single instance of the blown rig at Deepwater Horizon, BP had a deal with the U.S. federal government that excused it from paying any royalties, and subcontracted the building and operation of the rig to Halliburton, Cameron and other corporations. If they too were human beings like our hypothetical human BP, we could add "conspiracy to commit" and "conspiracy to conceal" in front of all the previously mentioned offenses, and the lot of them along with many of their favorite government officials could be rounded up.

When it suits their purposes, employees and mouthpieces of various transnational firms hasten to assure us that "corporations are people too." In a sense this is certainly true. Despite what some bible thumping fundamentalists will tell you, corporations were not ordained by the Almighty. Corporations are legal fictions. They are artificial shields under which we agree to allow a handful of extremely wealthy people to rule over the rest us, and plunder the planet and its people at will, just as centuries ago most of the humans who mattered agreed that kings, queens and nobly born, the "people of quality" had the god given right to ride roughshod over humanity.

Ultimately, people woke up, rose up, and revoked those privileges. How long will it be before we revoke the lawless privileges of corporations, before we limit their immunity, curtail their immortality, and rein in their immorality?. How long can we, and the planet on which we depend for life itself, wait? Is there every a line that cannot be crossed? Where is it? What will it take?

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Posted by mammonmessiah at [10:59 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

Friday, May 14, 2010

[Let Us Finally Gift The Life That Was Gifted To Us !!](#)

The occupation of America (the public-Nation) by the United States (the private-State) MUST END - this applies to Canada as well, essentially the 51st State (has been for decades), and Britain; ALL ARE SIMILARLY OCCUPIED AND OWNED, the Anglo-American Brotherhood goes back millennia. **WE MUST RESIST: ** OUR ONLY WEAPON IS OUR REFUSAL !!** ** Violence must be avoided at all cost, the Corporate behave as beasts, we must not. Partisanship is used by those wholly corporate as it is an instrumentality of it. **A blend of Rwandan-Serbian "Tea" steeped in hate and violence will only serve corporate interests and increase our suppression and enslavement. Those who incite violence must be indicted; if death results they must be charged with inciting Genocide. An invective firestorm can only result in harm and they know it - DO NOT BE USED BY THEM !!**

We are the VALUE of the currency. The CORPORATE hold the threat of physical force over us, but we hold the the ultimate power over them, the VALUE of their riches, without us they are less than paupers. **We must take back our value and employ it for ourselves, together !! Disinvest from the Corporate, repudiate their debt and Government and**

invest in community. Withdraw all support and use of Federal Reserve Notes (FRN's) and associate currencies (CDN Dollar / Pound / EURO), demand employment of public monies !! Protect your neighbors from predatory banks: surround their homes and resist repossession (without violence) !! Withdraw all monies from any bank who will repossess any home !! POLICE AND MILITARY, WE ARE YOUR BROTHERS, SISTERS, SONS, DAUGHTERS, AUNTS, UNCLES, MOTHERS AND FATHERS: YOU ARE US, WE ARE YOU - STAND WITH US NOT THE CORPORATE: YOU ARE FAMILY, THEY ARE NOT (all of us are considered chattel by them - they "disowned" us as family a long time ago in order to "own" us as slaves) !! WHEN OUR RIGHTS ARE SUPPRESSED AND TRAMPLED ON SO ARE YOURS - PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR SOLES ON OUR SOULS !!

Our Nations are about to collapse, their artificial supports have rotted away, have crumbled, have been hammered by willful intent, neglect and greed !! If we do not step in and assume responsibility for our safety and security we will surely perish. WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR FAMILIES AND TO OURSELVES: OUR FUTURE IS OURS OR THERE WILL BE NO FUTURE !! "DO NO HARM, CAUSE NO LOSS" MUST BE REMADE AS THE COMMON LAW OF THE LAND !! The Spiritual Illness that possesses us, that occupies every facet of our lives must be cured. It is Mammon, the false-god of the Corporate. It is cured by out-going concern, forgiveness and unselfish love - well-being and salvation is the result - a gift from God (no matter your definition): if the "result" is unselfish love (giving not taking) then it is the truth - all else is error. A society of the "gift" gives life, a society of the "take" takes life. LET US FINALLY GIFT THE LIFE THAT WAS GIFTED TO US, IT IS OURS TO GIVE !!

Note: Previously posted on April 03, 2010



Posted by mammonmessiah at [12:29 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Gary D. Barnett: Greece Is A Warning For America

Beware the Recent Situation in Greece: It Will Happen Here!

by Gary D. Barnett [article link](#)

May 14, 2010 | LewRockwell

The current situation in Greece should be well studied and watched carefully. Rioting, property destruction and even murder, the absolute wrong way for citizens to react to this government-caused debacle, has begun in earnest. While this should not surprise anyone, it should serve as a warning to other countries; most especially America. As I write this, another massive bailout is occurring; and of course the U.S. taxpayer is once again on the hook for billions of dollars. This time though, it is going overseas. If current U.S. government policy remains in place; that is inflation, bailouts, excessive spending, increased taxation, higher deficits, etc., this causing even more unemployment, then not only in my opinion will rioting and civil unrest occur here, but it will dwarf anything seen recently in Greece.

While some may doubt that this can happen in America, I would warn that this thinking is devoid of reality and downright naïve. Not only could it happen here, but the level of government intervention and government control of the citizenry should it happen here, could very well be widespread, aggressive and rights-destroying at a level not seen in the past. I have written about [here](#) and [here](#) the probability of Martial Law, and about the U.S. government's plans to arrest and incarcerate, and hold without charge or trial, those not abiding by or adhering to unconstitutional government mandates. My belief and opinion is that if things get out of hand, and the citizenry practices any form of real dissent, that the government response will be aggressive and brutal. Don't automatically put this aside, as not only is this scenario possible but probable considering the turmoil that is sure to come.

In Greece, the people have been protesting against spending cuts, when in fact the exact opposite should be the case. Not only do they seem to want the bailout cash (and apparently have now secured it), but they want it used to perpetuate the same spending and socialist programs that helped get them into so much economic trouble in the first place. They should not take any bailout money; money that only adds to debt, and instead should default and start anew. Of course this would be temporarily very harmful, but the alternative is much worse. The so-called "harsh austerity measures" proposed by the Greek government should have happened long ago if the current bankruptcy was to be avoided. A dependent welfare

society like that of Greece will have to have a change of ways, and a much more self-reliant attitude if they are going to survive economically; even if the recent bailout plans go forward. If however, the bailout of Greece is completed, what incentive will they have to curb spending in the future? And why would they, given that governments of other countries are willing to steal from their own citizens in order to bail them out? This sounds like a recipe for perpetual economic obsolescence to me!

The U.S. is currently in the same position, only it is a much larger problem than that of Greece. Who will bail out the U.S. when the trough runs dry? While the U.S. has massive debt, it is constantly adding fuel to the fire by continuing deficit spending, continuing unwarranted and expensive wars, and by adding new and expensive welfare schemes like Obamacare; schemes that can only exacerbate an already very tenuous economic predicament. The immediate consideration should be to demand that government implement very “harsh austerity measures” here, effectively cutting spending at every level, and the people of this country should accept nothing less. Will this happen? I don’t think there is a chance in Hades that this proper response will occur, but without it things will continue to worsen.

Careful consideration by the American people is now mandatory if a non-violent and positive outcome to the impending economic downfall is expected. The first thing that Americans should demand is to abolish the Fed! This would stop the unending government money-pumping machine in its tracks! Given the recent Senate vote (62–37) against even auditing the Fed, ending it has now become much more difficult. The last thing Americans should consider is unprovoked violence, rioting, looting and uncontrolled mob behavior. This will only escalate the situation and guarantee the government force machine’s deployment of state thugs. The U.S. government has been and is currently preparing for just this type of situation, and has the plans and manpower to deploy those under state and federal government control; the National Guard, Reserves, local and state police and even active military combat squads attached to the Northern Command ([see here](#)), to respond to any civil unrest situation. This needs to be understood by those willing to stand up to the mighty State!

Dissent and non-violent revolt are proper ways to stand against a tyrannical government, but once those involved in any kind of dissent begin to practice unwarranted violence against their fellow man; rioting, destroying property and physically harming others, which has happened in Greece recently, then they have become that same monster which they desire to destroy. This has been a normal result of many revolutionary activities throughout history, but this kind of behavior simply negates any other legitimate action by the people.

Real and appropriate revolt should be leveled only toward an out-of-control government, and should only be advanced in a non-violent manner unless of course one’s life is in-excusablely threatened or harmed by an act of aggression by the state. Then, and only then, would self-defense to protect one’s life and property become necessary and moral. With this approach, the citizenry will always be on the side of right, instead of being an enemy of the state or of the people at large. Regardless of the state’s position, the citizen who practices non-violent dissent and legitimate self-defense is practicing a proper method against tyranny.

As I have said many times, I don’t believe our economic and political dilemma will be solved by the use of the political process. In fact, I think our current political process a major part of the problem. While I wish I was wrong, I think it is far too late to expect such a complex problem to be solved politically; especially since political solutions most always fail and are normally corrupt and compromised. And given that self-reliance has all but disappeared in this country, and that today real and pure libertarian ideology is mostly absent (with the notable exception of the principled few, of course), why expect a “political” fix? Look where that route has taken us so far! I think attitudes are slowly changing for the better, but much more popular support for freedom and free markets is necessary before the federal government will be forced to accept our terms. While I will remain cautiously optimistic, especially considering current public resistance, I think some sort of economic collapse or other major debacle will have to occur before enough Americans wake up and face the fact that our once beloved country is in the midst of total decline.

What will you do when the streets of America become filled with angry protestors bent on causing violent havoc and destruction? What will you do when mandatory curfews are put into place in your town? And what will you do when Martial Law is declared by this already corrupt and totalitarian government? What will you do when the response to an event such as this by “your” government is one of massive and violent force against normal citizens?

Waiting for a disaster to happen is not the answer. The time to act is now before a situation like that in Greece takes place. We have the ability to make this happen peacefully, but once riots are the rule of the day, it will be much more difficult to rein in this runaway federal government.

One of my neighbors approached me the other day and thanked me for writing and fighting for freedom. He said “There are many more than you know who agree with you, but they are a silent majority.” My comment to him was: “It is no longer a time to be silent; everyone should speak out against tyranny.” Will you remain passive and content, oblivious to the very real and dangerous situation at hand, while your life, liberty, and property are at stake, or will you speak out? I say enough is enough, and none of us should take it anymore!

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[Danny Schechter: How to Stop the Economic War Sweeping the World?](#)

How to Stop the Economic War Sweeping the World?

Can We Challenge the Crimes of Our Time?

Will The Wall Street Banksters Ever Be Held Accountable?

by Danny Schechter [article link](#)

May 14, 2010 | Global Research

We are all still stuck in the “big Muddy.” No, not the wars of old or even the oil disaster. The mud I am referring to is more like quicksand and it sucks anyone who wants to look at what happened in the financial crisis deeper and deeper into it.

Soon, you are buried in shifting sea of so-called “exotic financial instruments,” and tranches, derivatives, credit default swaps, naked short-selling, etc and so forth, ad fin item. It’s murkier in there than in the oil-infested waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

Stop, my head hurts.

A far simpler explanation, pervasive fraud and financial crime, has been ignored by most of our economic geniuses. As I made my film Plunder The Crime of Our Time offering a “crime narrative,” I ran up against the denial that greeted my 2006 film In Debt We Trust warning of a meltdown. Then I was called, a “doom and gloomer.” Now I have just been ignored or considered simplistic.

Why is that? There are cultural and ideological reasons. The world of finance is dominated by the elite of the elite, up-right citizens all, including many philanthropists and patrons of the arts. How could such important “big men” ever be accused of slimy crimes?

James K. Galbraith, an economist and the son of John Kenneth Galbraith, the late and great economist who argued that “corporate larceny” was behind the crash of ’29, (I honor him in the DVD of my film) believes that the economics profession, the “experts” who set the terms of the debate are partly responsible. He shared his views in recent Congressional testimony.

“I write to you from a disgraced profession. Economic theory, as widely taught since the 1980s, failed miserably to understand the forces behind the financial crisis. Concepts including “rational expectations,” “market discipline,” and the

"efficient markets hypothesis" led economists to argue that speculation would stabilize prices, that sellers would act to protect their reputations, that caveat emptor could be relied on, and that widespread fraud therefore could not occur. Not all economists believed this – but most did.

Thus the study of financial fraud received little attention. Practically no research institutes exist; collaboration between economists and criminologists is rare; in the leading departments there are few specialists and very few students. Economists have soft-pedaled the role of fraud in every crisis they examined, including the Savings & Loan debacle, the Russian transition, the Asian meltdown and the dot.com bubble. They continue to do so now. At a conference sponsored by the Levy Economics Institute in New York on April 17, the closest a former Under Secretary of the Treasury, Peter Fisher, got to this question was to use the word "naughtiness." This was on the day that the SEC charged Goldman Sachs with fraud."

What a world: people who steal food are deemed criminals and sent away with long sentences in a prison system with the highest rate of incarceration in the world. Banksters are considered "naughty."

This may be changing, ever so slowly, as a new era of investigations begins. The President has created a new federal anti-financial fraud task force. Goldman Sachs is being probed. So is Morgan Stanley. The Daily Beast reports on NY Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's latest highly political legal jihad:

"New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo is launching an investigation into eight banks to see whether they misled rating agencies, The New York Times reports Thursday. The agencies have been under attack since the financial crisis for over-rating the quality of mortgage investments offered by the banks. Cuomo's new inquiry suggests that he believes that error may be in part due to banks' chicanery. The A.G. is targeting Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, UBS, Citigroup, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, Crédit Agricole, and Merrill Lynch. It is a high-profile investigation for a politician who is said to have his heart set on New York's governor's seat."

The problem here is that the criminal enterprise we are up against is not just in finance where securities laws only protect investors, but in real estate and insurance. The crimes there were more pervasive and hurt more people. You need a sense of how this whole system of corruption worked. This chart offers one sense of it: [view chart](#)

This is why prosecutors need to use the RICO law aimed at conspiracies, not just lone wrong doers. Sadly, many in the media, including progressives, prefer the top-ten "list" approach used by magazines focusing on individuals not institutions. This personalizes the problem focusing anger at bad people, not a system gone amuck. Example: an excellent but limited list of bad guys posted by [AlterNet](#): on "[America's Ten Most Corrupt Capitalists](#)".

Overseas, in Greece and England, and other parts of Europe, there's been an indictment of American corporate predators, especially Goldman Sachs. They are being denounced as "financial terrorists" and discussed in terms of their links to various elite business formations like the Bilderberg Group. While unions say workers are being targeted in an economic war, the left also sees a counterrevolution underway against democracy with power moving firmly into the hands of bond traders and markets demanding austerity, not people's Parliaments and elected politicians. European leaders say they are at war, too, against "speculators"

Surprisingly, there are voices on the right also speaking out. Cliff Kincaid of Accuracy in Media, an ultra conservative organization now fears that "Hedge Funds Spark World Revolution," writing:

"The Marxists used to be the experts in exploiting human suffering for the purposes of sparking revolution. But the hedge funds are doing better than the Marxists.

Consider that the business publication Barron's has an article headlined on its cover, "A savvy hedge-fund manager reveals how to make money on Old World's woes." A better headline would have been "How to exploit human suffering." At a time when people are dying in Greece because of riots in response to economic problems, what kind of publication would openly advertise how to make money at the expense of others and profit from their misery?

But this is how the hedge fund short sellers and their apologists work.”

Even as the banks push back against financial reform, watering down legislation against derivatives, too big to fail banks and even a full audit of the Federal Reserve Bank, the crisis lurches out of control. The NY Times reports that many jobs are not coming back, and debt is on the rise to historic levels. The next crash will be worst.

The Banksters need to be stopped, but only the people can do that—our media and politicians, right center and progressive, are not up to the task. What we need is more than exposes but a major effort to organize like foroureconomy.org. This is the only way to fight back against a one-sided war.

Mediachannel’s News Dissector **Danny Schechter** directed Plunder The Crime Of Our Time and wrote the companion book, The Crime of Our Time. Plunderthecrimeofourtime.com. Comments to Dissector@mediachannel.org

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